











# HUMOURS OF A PEAT COMMISSION

BY

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EDITOR OF THE SHETLAND NEWS

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*VOLUME II.*

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T. & J. MANSON

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE TO FIRST VOLUME.

THIS volume is published in response to numerous requests from readers of the series of sketches entitled "A Peat Commission," which are appearing in the columns of the *Shetland News*. It covers the period from the appointment of the Commission to the time when the Practical Member, Mr Jeremiah Laurenson, comes to Lerwick and has his first experience of billiards. Should the reception accorded to the present volume seem to justify the step, the subsequent doings of the Commission will also be issued in book form.

Needless to say, no such body as the Commission described ever existed. The sayings and doings attributed to its members are altogether imaginary. The supposed existence of such a body, however, served two purposes—first, to furnish a background or stage-setting for the central figure, the Practical Member; and secondly, to satirise mildly the extravagant and leisurely methods of actual Government Commissions.

The spelling of the vernacular is as far as possible phonetic. Contraction marks and accented letters, which as frequently puzzle as assist the reader, have been sparingly used; and where purely Shetlandic words occur, their meaning as a rule is given in the text. The word "in" is contracted into the single letter i; "of" into o; "that" into at; and "have" into a, as in the following sentence—"I know at i da sooth

pairt o Shetlan da men wid a hed mair sense," which, it should be explained to those unacquainted with the Shetland dialect, means, "I know that in the south part of Shetland the men would have had more sense." As a rule, the u in the word "tu" should be pronounced as in the Norse ö.

The felicitous and highly artistic manner in which Mr Arthur Abernethy has portrayed, in his excellent drawings, some of the scenes described, will certainly give keen pleasure to the readers of the book.

THOS. MANSON.

"SHETLAND NEWS" OFFICES,  
LERWICK, May, 1918.

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#### PUBLISHERS' NOTE.


THE Press and the general public have given the first volume of "Humours of a Peat Commission" a reception of such a cordial nature as to justify the publication of a second volume of the series. Should it receive a similar reception, the third and concluding volume will be issued.

T. & J. MANSON.

"SHETLAND NEWS" OFFICES,  
LERWICK, September, 1919.

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## CHAPTER XX.

"Oh fur dis weemen an dir hats," says the P.M. He witnesses a remarkable exhibition of billiards and has some "lemonade."

"MY DEAR FRIEND," said the Tittie to the P. M. next morning, "are you realising that to 'rig-out,' as you term it, Miss G. and myself with new wedding dresses is going to cost you a lot of money?"

"I'm realisin dat fast anof, I can tell you, perteeclarly after haein ta laanch oot naar nine pound at yon confundid billirds da streen. Heth, I'll hae dat baa i da hol yit afore I go hom, or my name is no Jerry. Oh, ylss, I kno aa aboot dat. Bit, my jewel at ye ir, what Jirry says he sticks till; an da dresses ye sall hae, if I hae ta sell my owld buits. Dunna ye bodder aboot dat. Da thing is to get da busness under wigh, fur der no muckle time till next Fürsday. I wis tinkin, ye kno, seein at dis wis a kind o a big oardir, at da best wye wid be ta divide it. Ye could geng to wan place, an da high-heeler till anidder, an Mary fur hersell an her midder till a third."

"No, no, Mary must come with me. I know exactly what will suit her, and I know what to select."

"Of coorse I'm gaen wi da whole o you mesell, becaas—

"You come and select women's dresses and hats!"

"Most certainly. It's no fur da money. I'll juist gie every wan o you her allooance. It's juist becaase I kno at a lok o dis lasses don't kno hoo ta dress demsells richt. Dey edder get da wrang colour, or da wrang thing, or da wrang shape, or a hat at doesna set dem, or somethin. Noo, if der wan thing at man haes abune weemen its da sense ta know whin a woman is well pitten on—well dressed, as ye wid say. Some weemen dü ken, an can pit ipa demsells wi sense; bit tak ye my wurd fur it, more as tree wharters o dem don't."

"And, may I ask, do you consider that I can be reckoned among those who can dress themselves?"

"Weel, ye're no bad. Ye're not sae bad, I wid say. Bit der juist wan or twa things I wid alter, even wi you. Ye see I want you ta look rael nice. I wid laek you ta tak da shine oot o da whole baand. An dan dir Mary. What sense hes shü, brought up i da country?"

"My experience of country girls is that they can dress themselves with very great taste, indeed, many of them. No, no; the thing is too ridiculous, too silly for anything. The utmost Mary and I will do is, after we have selected the material and style, to allow you to see the dress in an illustration. We might let you see the hats we select, that is, if the milliners have any in stock."

"Da hats I most an will see. I'll set mi fit doon ipu da hats. Loard gaird me, woman, da hats at some o dis weemen wear is anof ta frichten a owld yowe. Wan time dey hae a thing flached doon ipu der heads laek a mutch; neist its laek a aald man's coolie;

dan ye see a thing aboot da size o a forty shilling pot stuck aa ower wi mair flowers as I wid tink da Loard ever made; wan time ye'll see a thing as flat as a pancake aboot a yaird across trimmed wi feddirs flappin in da wind laek a boat's sail whin shu heaves to; efter dat ye'll see a objec o a thing drawn ticht ta da head wi a kind o cock's comb aboot nine inches lang stickin up i da front o it; dan ye'll see a contrivance as if it wis wuppid aboot da head; dan ye'll see a peerie felt rig-oot stuck in wi preens aboot da lent o puddin pins; an dan ye'll come ipon a thing stuck ipu da tap o da hair lookin as if it hed nae connection wi it at aal. Dan dir silk hats, an furry hats, an straw hats, an He alone knows hoo mony mair. No, no; hats is ower serious a thing fur you twa ta be left alon wi. Da field is ower big, an selection is ower difficult fur onyeen bit a man o experience. Oh, fur dis weemen an dir hats."

"Yes, and with every different style they wear they look more charming and sweet."

"Feth, I don't kno aboot dat. Hed dat been da case, dey wid aa been in Heeven lang ago, fur dey wid a been far ower charmin an sweet fur dis world."

"Well, well, we will agree to let you see the hats before deciding; and we *may* defer to your opinion. But I give no undertaking. Before we go, we would need to know the amount of our 'alloonance,' as you call it."

"Weel, I wis tinkin, ta do da thing richt, ta pit it dis wye. Ye can go da lent o eight pound, an Mary seeven, an Madam six."

"Thank you, that's generous. That should do very well. But why should Miss G. only

get six pounds, while I am allowed eight?"

"Oh, juist becaas your you, an shu's her. Dats da raeson, my jewel. An its juist as gude a raeson as da weemen ever gie aboot onything, fur dey generly gie non."

"Well, we'll go and see Madam, and set matters agoing. The best you can do is to go and get your messages. Shall I come and assist you to buy a 'strood' for the boy?"

"Ye needna fash. We'll manish wirsells. I nivir laek ta hae da weemen pokin aboot whin I'm buying onything. Dey aye tink dey ken better, an of coorse dey ken nothin aboot it. We'll geng alang dis Esplanade, as dey caa it, first. Da boy is fair taen up wi aa dis ships an boats an da multitude o folk. An of coorse he maun go ta da pictirs da night, he says, come what will."

"Well, well. Ta, ta. See you later. But, by-the-way, I'll have to go and inform Madam about the 'allooance,' so that she can make a start too. She will likely be in bed yet, after the dance."

"Oh, laekly anof. Dats juist what ye micht expec. Weel, I'll meet you an Mary at da Market Cross at a wharter ta two. Wir denner is at two o'clock."

"All right." And the Tittie and Mary set off to the Queen's, while the P. M. and the boy went on an exploring expedition.

"Noo, Joanie, howld de head up, an walk strecht, an dunna look as if du hed nivir seen onything i dee life. Come an look at dis ships at da pier? Boy, I don kno. I harly tink at dir alloood ta look at dem naar at. Bit what's dis ats goin on here?"

Grasping Joanie firmly by the hand the P. M. went toward a large crowd gathered round three small boxes of fish, two of haddocks and one of "mixed," very small "flukes," gurnets, etc.

"How much for this box of haddocks? How much am I bid?" asked the auctioneer.

"Twenty-five shillings, I'm bid. Twenty-six, twenty-seven, twenty-eight shillings, twenty-nine, thirty shillings, I'm bid. Thirty shillings."

"Loard guide my sowl an boady! Dis folk most be mad. Thirty shilling fur as mony haddocks as wid a been twa diets ta wir grice! He's not don yet, edder. Forty shillins! an still shu goes up. Wha *is* biddin? I can hear nothin."

What struck Jerry as the appalling part of the proceedings was that except for some women carrying small baskets, who looked concerned and even "wae," the bulk of the crowd stood looking on with the utmost composure. Some were smoking, others seemed amused; most looked as if it were all part of the ordinary day's work. The fishermen, however, seemed to be highly pleased. In their view, the performance was excellent: the band was playing all right. The bidding went on. Pushing in among the people, Jerry looked for those who were perpetrating what he considered this enormity, and at length he saw that the trick was done by the simple means of lifting up the head and giving the auctioneer a look.

"Fifty-four shillings. Are you all done? Fifty-five. Fifty-five I'm bid. Fifty-six. All done? Fifty-six. Going, going—"

"Heeven help da folk at lives in dis toon; dats aa at I can say. Fifty-six stures wis mair laek it,

An mony is da time I'm sowld more an better fur less. Joanie, come oot o here. I'll no be da better o dis da day. Fifty-six shillins fur yon !”

“Boy, I canna come an glower at da ships i da harbour or at da pier, an I'm no gaen ta dü it edder. No ; I'll tell dee what we'll dü. We'll geng up along here, an du can geng in ta da sweetie shop an buy a bit a likerish—dat'll no hurt dee—an twartree sweeties. Dan if du'll promise ta stay on da pier, an tak care o deesell an no faa i da sea, I'll laeve dee fur a peerie while, fur I hae some aerands ta get at I most attend till at wance.”

Joanie of course gave the necessary assurances, glad to be left to himself, feeling an inch taller in being left in a strange place without parental supervision. The purchases having been made, he went down to the pier, hands in pockets, and a “quid” of liquorice in his mouth of such dimensions as to expand his cheek out of all natural proportion.

“I don kno what Betty wid say ta dis, laevin da boy alon ; bit I canna help it. I most see aboot dis coarn plaister. Mi feet is in an aafil condition.”

Going along the street a short distance, the P. M. brought up at a chemist's shop, and after surveying it for some time, entered.

“Dis is fine wadder,” he said to a young man behind the counter.

“Beautiful weather. Very fine. The best I think we have had for many years.”

“It's truly dat. Ye hae a fine shop here.”

“Yes, the shop is very nice. Is there anything I can do for you?”

“I'm been aafil troubled wi twa coarns, wan ipun



my left peerie tae, an wan atween twa taes, an I wis winderin if ye hed onything at could dü ony gude. Ye see, I got a pair o new buits at wis ower peerie, an dey're played da ill-helt wi mi feet."

"Oh, there's nothing like small and ill-fitting boots for producing corns, and very troublesome things they are too."

"Dat dey ir. Ye see i da country I usuilly wear rivlins, bit whin I wis pit ipu dis Paet Commission I hed ta get a pair o daecent buits. Feth, dey wir dear anof, I kno dat."

"Oh, you're one of the famous Peat Commission, are you? Perhaps you're the P. M., the Practical Member himself?"

"Weel, dey hed ta get somebody on it at kent somethin, fur da rest kno nothin—aboot paets, I mean; an dey schoiced me somewey ir anidder."

"And of course you have an intimate knowledge of everything connected with peats?"

"I'm wirked wi paets aa mi life, so I ought ta ken somethin aboot dem. Bit what aboot da coärns?"

"Oh, yes, yes. Well, you can have three things—a solution to put on with a brush, or a soft sort of ring, or a silk plaster."

"I tink I'll tak da plaister. It 'ill be aesir. Ye dunna keep baccy, du ye?"

"No, I'm sorry. We do not."

"Dir a perteeclar kind o tick twist I wid laek ta get as lang as I'm i da toon. Man, dis baccy, laek most idder tings, is faan aff aafil fae dis weary war began."

"That's true enough. But there's a shop over here where they keep the best brands of all tobaccos,

I have no doubt you will get what you want there."

"Thank you," said Jerry as he paid for and pocketed the plaster, instructions for use having been given. Leaning over and whispering to the young man, he said. "Ye coodna pit me i da wye o getting a coarn o gude whisky, tink ye?"

"I'm afraid, my friend, that such an article is unprocurable at the present time."

"It's juist as a medicine, ye kno, I'm wantin it. Betty, da wife, taks waek turns noo an dan, an I alwis laek ta hae it i da hoose, ye ken."

"The only way such a thing can be got is to obtain a certificate from a doctor, or a J.P., or a minister."

"Tink ye wid dey no gie it if I towld dem I wis wan o da Paet Commission—wan o da Govermint, so ta spaek?"

"I'm afraid not. Then of course a certificate could not be given for your good wife by anyone here. The party who gets the certificate must be personally known to the person who gives it, who has to be sure that the liquor is to be used only as a medicine."

"Weel, I could aesy get dat don. I'm no sae young as I wance wis, an every noo an dan I feel mi hert is no juist wirkin as weel as shu wis wint. I hae nae doot a doctor wid gie me a certificate fur mesell, bit whaar 'll I fin een?"

"You're lucky, for here comes the very man you want," as a member of the medical profession stepped into the shop.

A few words sufficed to explain to the doctor the P. M.'s position and "rewhirements." Jerry

however, after being introduced, explained in fuller detail all about Betty and himself, to which the doctor, with a twinkle in his eye, listened with amused attention.

"All right, come out and see me in the afternoon."

"Very weel. I'll get da woman at I ludge wi ta shaw me da place. Weel, I'll bid you baith gude day."

"Yon's twa plaesant chields, I will say," said the P. M., as he left the shop and made his way north over the street. "I'll no hae ta furget aboot da doctor. I winder hoo Joanie is. Oh, he's aa right. He's no a fule. Heth, here's da Graand. I winder if dir anybody i da billird room. I most get yon red baa in wan o da hols afore I shak da dust o dis toon aff o my feet."

Going upstairs and making straight for the billiard room, as if he had known the place all his life, Jerry opened the door and peeped in.

"Oh, du's here, is du," he said to the boy. "Is doo playing desell."

"Just knocking the balls about. For a fifty?"

"I kno nothin aboot your fifties or your hunders; bir I wid laek ta pit yon red baa i da hol."

"Nothing easier, my dear sir," and leaning over the table, with a firmness and accuracy born of long practice, the imp potted the red, which was lying nine inches from the upper right hand pocket, with a resounding whack which made the P. M. jump.

"Boy, is du clean mad? Is du gaen ta brak da baas? If du braks da baas an I tear da cloth, da man 'ill no lat wis in."

"That's nothing. That's only the ball striking

the side of the table as it enters the pocket after a good smack. Do you want to see the balls struck so that they kiss each other like a zephyr blowing on the daffodils, as the poets would say?" Placing the red a few inches from the same pocket, and the white near the top cushion, with a gentle shot the boy put the red softly down, the ball he played at the same time drawing up and just touching the white. "Do you want to see more gentle summer work?" Placing the red and white in close proximity, he "nursed" the balls with tenderness, making cannons every time. "Do you want to witness a winter gale?" Putting the red on the spot, and going to baulk, he screwed in off the red, then put the white in a position for a difficult cannon, which demanded force, and for two minutes knocked the three balls about with a fury that made the P. M. gasp for breath.

"Boy, du's surely lost dee wit entirely. Du'll hae da baas in bits."

"Do you want to see a spring morning?" And with a lighter and more graceful touch, a quieter but still beautiful game was played. "Or an autumn evening? Four styles of play, sir, like the seasons of the year. That's how we do the trick," he said, as he calmly chalked his cue. "Not having anything to-day?"

"I'm towld dey canna get a drap o whisky, an I dunna laek dis beer."

"No, but you can have a little wine, for your stomach's sake, you know, as Saint Paul said."

"Paul wis a sensible man, I'll say dat aboot him. I tink I'll hae a coarn of somethin. Bit I don't kno what ta tak."

"We'll soon make a selection," said the imp, as he rang the bell. "Bring the wine list, please," as the waiter appeared,

"Here's a wine, sir, I can strongly recommend. Not that I take wine myself, but I have heard those who do say so. It's very like lemonade, very fizzy and light and exhilarating. Heidseick. That's your wine, sir. My poison is Schwebpe's, with a box of De Reszke cigarettes thrown in."

"Dat 'ill du as weel as anidder, I daarsay."

"Waiter, a pint of Heidseick and a bottle of Schwebpes, with a big box of De Reszkes, and charge to the gentleman."

"Yes, sir."

"Man, dis is fine tasty lemonade, I most say. Dir most be somethin more in it as lemonade. It's a lock better, at ony rate, as we get i da country."

"Oh, there's a grape or two in it, you know, to preserve it, I believe," answered the boy, who had half finished his glass and was enjoying one of his beloved cigarettes. "But I have been told it's a mistake to let it stand in the bottle. You must drink it all up at once. It soon loses the fizz." And the imp took up the cue again and began playing, waiting the development which he knew was coming, between the puffs whistling snatches of "Gae bring ta me a pint o' wine."

After a few minutes, during which the P. M. was very busy filling his pipe, the whole pint having vanished, the boy casually remarked, "Going to pot the red?"

"I maun du dat. I maun du dat dis day afore I laeve da place."

"Well, here's a nice cue, and I'll place the ball in a good position. Have a try now. Steady's the word," as Jerry rose rather unsteadily and grasped the cue.

"Boy, I see no red baa. Whaar is shu?"

"She's here. Now, aim well, drive straight, and put her down."

"Man, I can't see da thing. I'm gotten wan o mi waek turns, I see. Mi hert is aff agen. I'll need ta go hom an hae a rest."

"Have a try."

Just as Jerry was making a desperate effort to visualise the red ball, the door opened, and the two clerks, and Mr H. and Mr I. appeared on the scene.

"Oh, ho—aha—! The P. M. playing billiards. I thought practical work was his forte," ejaculated the Principal Clerk.

"An so it wis, an so it is. Bit I'm no been feelin weel da day, an I cam here fur a bit o a rest an a smok. I'm no ony better. I tink I'll tak a bit o a walk. I ken a man oot ower at maks tushkars, an I tink I'll go an see him an get a walk at da sam time. We must hae tushkars, ye kno. Ye canna cast paets ithoot implements. So, boy, I'se see dee again."

For the next half hour the billiard room rang with the laughter of the four as the imp recounted how he had led the P. M. on the rocks—and made him pay for the experience.



## CHAPTER XXI.

Joanie faas ower da Pier. The P. M. is very repentant: reads the Bible; and resolves to give up "dis billards." But alas!—

As the P. M., left the billiard room he was met on the stairhead by the waiter, who presented his little bill.

"What's dis?"

"That's the account, sir."

"To—to—to. Boy, what is dis? I canna mak it oot?"

"Heidseick, sir."

"Headseek. Faeth, dats true anof. Bit I toucht it wis lemonade I got. Dats a funny name fur lemonade."

"No, sir, it was champagne."

"Champagne! I niver asked fur champagne. Dats aafil dear stuff, isna hit."

"The order was for a pint of Heidseick, a Scheppe's, and a box of De Reszke's, altogether, with billiards, thirteen shillings."

"Weel, da billirds I hed, so far, an yon headseek I took, bit yon sweeps an—an—an da rakes I niver saw."

"The boy saw them, though, and used them."

"I see. Dis is da place fur da money. Thirteen shillins fur aboot a hoor! It's a Loard's blissin at Betty is forty mile away. Here's a pound," and the

P. M. slowly took out his pocket book and grudgingly handed a Treasury note to the unconcerned waiter.

In a minute that individual was back with the receipted bill and six shillings, which he presented on a small tray.

"Dis is only six shillins, as far as I can mak oot. I toucht I hed ta get seeven."

"Waiter, sir; waiter. Gentlemen always remember the waiter."

"An if dey don't he minds himsell. Railly, its nae winder at Betty said shu widna pit a fit in Lerrick. Shu's a hantle better oot o it. Is dis da wye oot?"

"Down stairs, sir. You cannot miss the door."

Slowly and carefully Jerry went down. He wasn't feeling so clear in the head as he would have felt say at mid-day in the peat hill; and he wisely considered that a walk as far as the Burn of Gremista would do him a lot of good. He could see about the tushkars on his way back. Having managed to light his pipe, he grasped his stick with a firm hand and set out. The fresh air and the exercise had their effect; and by the time he got back to the Gas Works, near which place he knew there was a man who made excellent implements of the kind he wished, he felt almost himself.

"Man, dis headseek stuff is far waar as whisky. Wi' whisky ye kno hoo muckle ta tack an whin ta laeve aff; wi yon pushon ye tink at ye can drink it laek watter, an yit it taks baand. Its laek aa dis foreign dirt. No, no; gie me honest whisky, an dan I ken what I'm about. Heth, I most see what Joanie is düin aa dis time. Dis 'ill never do."

After having found the place where the tushkars

could be had he ordered five, to be hefted and made completely ready and sent to his ludgin. They could "pit da account ta da Clerk o da Paet Commission at da Wheen's Hotel."

Duly impressed, the man informed the P.M. that the order would be attended to with promptitude. To his enquiry where he might get a cup of tea, he was directed to tea-rooms close by, where after a couple of cups of this refreshing beverage, and something to eat, he felt almost as fit as a fiddle.

"Dir somethin ta sae fur dis toon, too, ye kno. Ye can get locks o things very haandy, an a cup o tae is wan. Weel, I'll go strecht in ower dis Esplanade and see what da boy is düin."

In a minute or two the head of the Pier was reached, but Joanie was not to be seen. Neither was he at the point, or any part of it that Jerry could see.

"Whaar tink ye can da boy be gone? He's laekly gone hom ta da ludgin. He wid be gettin tired o staandin aboot."

Making up over the Pier to go and ascertain if his prognostications were correct, the P.M. was attracted by a crowd standing at the south slip. The crowd seemed excited, and he heard shouts of "Get in the boat and pull him out," "Take him by the hair," and "Hurry up for heaven's sake." A sudden fear arose in Jerry's heart. Could this be Joanie? Had the boy fallen into the sea?

Pushing his way among the people, his worst fears were realised. There, in the water, his cap off, a look of terror on his face, and churning the water with hands and legs, was Joanie, his Benjamin. "Loard haad his hand aboot me an da bairn tü! Dis

is aafil. Will dey get him oot livin? O, dis is aafil. Tank Güde, dir gotten him oot."

Squeezing himself to the edge of the slip, where his half-drowned and wholly terrified offspring was brought, held up by the hair of the head by a lad in a boat, Jerry clutched hold of him, saying, "Oh, Joanie, Joanie, du's droondid. Oh, boy, boy; why did du go an dü dis? What'll dy midder say?"

Joanie, though almost speechless, managed to say that he wasn't droondid, and that he didn't do it, for he was knocked over the pier.

"Oh, I widna misdoot dat. Da baand at lives in dis toon is fit fur onything. Bit come hom; come hom an get dry things ipu dee at wance. Dey'll be somethin efter dis, or I'm a lear."

As father and son went up towards the Market Cross, followed by an admiring crowd of boys, the burden of whose loud-whispered conversation was—"It wisna me," "It wis dee," "It wis Lowry Bain at shived him in," Jerry would been a great deal better pleased had the Tittie and Mary been elsewhere than in front of him.

"What's this? What have we here? What on earth is wrong?" asked the Tittie, in one breath.

"Fader o Paece, faider, what's come ower Joanie? He's aa weet."

"Joanie is been i da sea, my lamb. Dat's aa. Da Loard shurly made boys dat wye, fur dir never oot o mischief o some kind or idder. Bit what we hae ta dü is ta get him hom as fast as we can. We canna staand here an spaek an da object weet ta da hide."

"How did this happen," asked the Tittie, who

seemed to be much concerned, as they went to the  
• “ludgin.”

“I don kno. Joanie says at some o dis deevils  
imps aboot da pier shived him in. Bit in he’s been,  
an aa da mercy aboot it is at he’s livin. Of coorse he  
widna dü as I telt him, an no geng ta da edge o da  
pier.”

“Then you left him by himself?”

“Left him? Of coorse I left him fur twartree  
meenits. Can wan no laeve a boy o fourteen ta go  
an get a aerand? Bit I’ll watch mi lad anidder time,  
I’s e warran.”

The Tittie said nothing, and neither did Mary.  
They had their own opinion about the wisdom of  
leaving a boy who was a complete stranger to the  
place alone on a public pier.

When they arrived at the lodging, the woman,  
when she learned what had happened, was even more  
concerned than the Tittie.

“We mann get da bairn’s weet claes aff an pit  
him till his bed at wance. I’s e mak a strong brochin  
wi plenty o craem o tartar in it, ta gie him. I hoop  
nae ill ’ill come oot o it. Da dear boy.”

Joanie submitted with a good grace to all the  
attention paid him, and was soon comfortably  
esconced in a warm bed. The brochin sent a  
glow through his body, and effectually checked any  
danger of a chill. With a copy of a pictorial comic  
paper in his hand, which the Tittie had thoughtfully  
run out for, Joanie felt that worse things in this life  
might happen than to fall into the sea.

“Da Pictirs! Na, my jewel, dey’ll be nae Pictirs  
fur wiz dis nicht, I can tell you. An aboot seein

your hats at fower o'clock, dats oot o da whestin tü. I stramp no oot ower da door dis day or dis night, fur I mann see what's ta be da ootcome o dis dookin. Da boy 'ill maybe be laid up. Ye never kno. I juist hoop ta Him at made me at Betty hears no o dis. If shü does dey'll be twa Fridays i da week. I kno dat."

"Then we'll fix to-morrow at twelve for the hat exhibition, if all goes well. I can arrange with the milliners for that hour, and let them know you are not coming to-day."

"Yea, dat'll dü weel anof sae far as I can see. I'll ken bi da moarnin hoo da boy is gaen ta be. Of coorse dir nothin ta hinder you an Mary ta geng ta da Pictirs. Mary can bring in twartree o dis papers wi pictirs in dem ta da boy ta look at afore shu goes."

"All right. I hope there will be no bad after-effects, and that the boy will be all right to-morrow."

"I hoop so, too, I can tell you."

After a rather solemn dinner, of which he gave the boy only sparingly, in case it might upset him the more, Jerry settled himself for a quiet and reflective afternoon and evening. The woman had of course a Bible in the house, and, he had noticed, also a copy of Burns' poems. He hadn't observed the "Pilgrim's Progress" in the library; but he reflected that with the Bible and Burns, he was well provided. Joanie had "daamished ower" after his dinner, and, he was glad to see, was sleeping with long, natural breathings which betokened strong vitality and robust health. "A coarn o saat watter 'ill no dü him ony hairm. Hits a peety, aa da sam, hits happened sae."

Lighting his pipe, and cleaning and adjusting



his specs, the P. M. took down the Bible.

"Aye, aye, shu is a world. No paece fur edder sowl or boady, fae youth ta owld age. So its been an so it will be." In his present mood he felt he would find something to his liking in the Old Testament. "Da owld Prophets, ye kno. Dey kent what dis world wis. Dey did. Aye, aye."

Turning to the Proverbs, he began at chapter I. Reading on, he came to the 10th verse—"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." "Dere shu is. Dat's me. Dat's me an dis billirds. It's da billirds it's don it. Oh yiss, yiss. Yiss, yiss. Sinners indeed. It wis da billirds at made me laeve da boy alon, an of coorse hed I been wi him he widna a faan ita da sea. Here shu is again. Third shapter an eleevnt verse—"My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction." "Yiss, yiss; His chastening haand is ipun me noo. Dat's what I'm alwis said. Go away fae da Scriptur; slip aff o da Rock o Truth, an ye're don fur; ye're don fur entirely. Dear-a-dear! Yiss, here am I, tree score year owld, an yet, as he says in dis thirteenth shapter an third verse, I'm 'nedder learned wisdom nor hae da knowledge o da holy.' Weel, weel, no more billirds fur me i dis world. Dat's wan thing shure. No, no; its time ta be thinkin aboot somethin else at my time o life. What's dis he says here? Twenty-nint shapter an fifteent verse. 'The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.' 'Dere shu is again. Dere's my case exakly. Bit its not da midder. No, no; its da faider ats broucht da shame. Na, Betty wid a hed more sense as left da boy till himself in a strange

place. Dats wan thing shu wid not a don. Oh, dis billirds. Man, Solomon wis a winderfil owld chap. He kent aa about everything, yiss, even up till a boy faan ita da sea."

From the Proverbs the P. M. went on to Ecclesiastes, reading a chapter here and there; and from the Preacher he went back to the Psalms, in which he found a good deal to comfort and cheer him in his trouble.

"Du's waakened, Joanie, is du. Hoo is du?"

"Fine. I'm aa richt. I'm no gaen ta lie here ony langer."

"Weel, if du is aa right, du can rise ta dee tae. Efter dat we'se see whedder du'll go back ta bed or no. Pictirs! Boy, du's oot o dee wits. No, no; no Pictirs dis nicht, I can tell dee dat."

After tea, Joanie having been comfortably settled in an easy chair with a "rippin" boys' magazine, and thus needing no attention, Jerry bethought himself of his beloved Burns for the evening's reflection, "He kent da world too, did Burns, puir sowl. He wirked a croft an hed ta toil ipu da laand wi his nown haands. Dat laerns a man somethin, I tell you." Curiously enough, the poem the P. M. turned to was "Tam o' Shanter." Here he found several stanzas which suited his case to a T, as he sadly reflected. As for instance—

"Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet  
To think how mony counsels sweet,  
How many lengthened, sage advices  
The husband from the wife despises!"

and

"Pleasures are like poppies spread,

You seize the flower, its bloom is shed ;  
Or like the snow falls in the river,  
A moment white—then melts for ever.

“Less-a-less ! Dat is true. True, true.”

In this chastened and humble frame of mind Jerry filled in the evening, reading for a while, then getting up and having a bit of a walk round the room to stretch his legs, until supper time ; when after a further dip into both volumes and a smoke he and the boy turned in. “Oh, dis billirds, dis weary billirds,” he said, as he snoozed off to sleep. “No more o dat foally fur me.”

The morning broke fresh and bright. Joanie was as right as a trivet and after breakfast wanted to go out.

“No, no, oot o my sicht du goes not. I hae ta geng ower an see da lasses at twal o’clock, an efter denner we’ll geng oot tagedder. Bit in here du remains till I come back. I’se get dee some mair books ta look at, afore I go.”

Having perforce to submit, and having been provided with plenty of suitable literature, Joanie settled himself for the forenoon, reflecting that the evening at the Pictures would make up for all. At half-past ten his father left him, giving strict orders to the woman that on no account was the boy to go out until he came back. “Na, na, dat he’ll no, ye may depend.” The P. M. had “wan or twa aerands ta mak,” which he thought he could attend to before the hat exhibition.

Going north over the street, the first person he encountered was the imp, coming along smoking a cigarette.

"Hillo," he said. "Is this you? Fine wadder for the peats."

"It is dat truly."

"How is the boy?"

"He's aa richt. Der naethin wrang wi him, I'm tankfil ta say, efter his bit o weetin."

"Going to have a try at the red again?"

"Billirds? No, no. I'm whaet billirds aata-gedder."

"What? You don't mean to say you are going home without potting the red? You said you had to do that before you left Lerwick, or your name wasn't Jerry."

"Dat's true anof. I did say dat. Bit look what its broucht me till? Its nearly cost da boy his life, an I'm spent ower eight pound o gude money."

"My dear sir, you can't live in a dead calm all your life. Existence must have some sort of spice in it. You would die without some little fun and excitement."

"Maybe; bit dir different wyies o gettin baid da wan an da idder. Dis billirds, noo——"

"Billiards! There's no game like it. It teaches you everything a man should know—patience, care, fair-play, training of eye and hand, skill——"

"I hae nae time een noo, though. I hae ta meet da lasses at twal o'clock."

"Twelve o'clock! And its only a quarter to eleven now! Why, I could play two hundred in that time, and you could put the red in half-a-dozen times besides. Come along. It would be a disgrace for you to go home without putting that red ball in the pocket."

"I don't kno. Why dunna dey mak da hol bigger, or a baa peerier?"

"Ah, that's the point. That's where the skill comes in—the science, you know. Now, this is the very moment you should come and have a try. There's no one in the billiard room, for I have just left it."

Against his better judgment, but drawn by his inclination, and by a determination not to own himself beat, Jerry allowed himself to be taken once again to the billiard room. A rather poignant remembrance of his last night's resolution flashed across his mind, but he quieted his conscience by vowing that this was to be the last time.

"Have a seat, and light your pipe. I'll show you a few shots. Potting the red, you know, is not considered much of a shot. The cannon's the game, and going in-off."

"Pottin da red is plenty fur me, at ony rate. I'll be white content wi dat, an dan I'll 'stop."

"Will you? Why not try this, for example."

And eight consecutive times the boy went in off the red in the middle right-hand pocket, each time of course bringing the red into exact position.

"Man, yon looks aafil aesy. I most hae a try at dat."

"Oh, easy; yes, it's very easy—once you can do it. Here you are; there's the red lying beautifully."

Laying down his pipe and taking the cue, the P. M. made a dab at the red ball, struck it with force, and sent it careening over the table, his own bringing up at the left-hand corner.

"It's easy; very easy," said the imp.

"I don kno aboot dat. Da baas is aa geen wrang. Dir not lying da wye du hed dem. An my baa is no i da hol."

"It is not; and the red is at the wrong hole. Having anything to drink?"

"No, no. Not dis day."

"I'll have a lime-juice and soda."

"Weel, hae it."

Ringin the bell, the boy had it, giving orders to charge the gentleman.

"Lat me hae anidder try. Pit da baas richt."

This was done; and the second attempt was even worse than the first,

"Boy, da melishin is in dis things. Lat me try pittin doon yon red baa."

"Here you are."

The ball was of course placed at an awkward angle and at some distance from the pocket, and the result of Jerry's effort was the same as on previous occasions—failure.

"Confoond dis baas. Man, dis is aafil."

"Billiards, like peats, requires practice, sir, practice. Now, I'll show you a cannon or two."

"Boy, da Evil wan is shurely inta dy haands. Whan laearned du ta play?"

"In my youth. When I was young I took up the cue."

"Du's shurly begun afore du could spaek, dan. Fader a Mercy! Its past twal o'clock, an dat twa bits o lasses staandin waetin fur me ta look at dir hats! Fir sic a story, efter aa mi voos. What is man! A puir, sinfil craeter. Lat me get oot o dis fur mercy sake!"



The boy continued to play, with a twinkle in his eye and a smile on his face. "Done him again," he said.

## CHAPTER XXII.

The P. M. says da hats 'ill not do at all; an as fur da frocks! —

“One and six, sir, please.”

“What fur,” asked the P. M. of the waiter as he was going downstairs.

“Lime juice and soda, sir.”

“I never got ony lime juice, man, or soda edder. What am I gaen ta dü wi lime an soda in a hotel? I'm no buildin a hoose, an I'm no gaen ta bake bannicks. Dat's wan thing I canna dü.”

“The boy ordered a drink, sir, of lime juice and soda water, and told me to charge it to you.”

“He wis ower clever, I can tell him. He's a very smairt boy, yon. He's maybe ower smairt. Hooever, I'll pay an say nae mair aboot it. Bit I'se watch mi lad anidder time afore I tell him ta hae it. Man,” ruminated the P. M. as he proceeded downstairs, “dis toon is geen ower ta evil an wickedness o every description. Soadam an Gohmora wis nothin til it. An as fur money! Money! Bliss me, as I'm shalled oot more money in twa days here as I'm dune mony a time in da country in twa months, yiss, an keepit da faimly goin weel on it too. Weel, I suppose da best wye no ta get brunt is not to go near da fire. Bit its funny, min, somehoo or idder, da fire hes alwiss a drawin wye wi it. Sinfil natur, ye kno; sinfil natur.”

By this time Jerry had arrived at the front door, and proceeding northwards halted at the shop which he took to be that where the Tittie and Mary were awaiting him. "Dis is da place richt anof; dat's da name dey towld me."

Entering, the P. M. went up to the assistant at the counter and enquired if "dey wir twa young weemen waitin fur him here?"

"I'm sure I don't know. I—I—I hardly think so," said the assistant, who was not aware that theirs was a place where "young weemen" waited for oldish men.

"Weel, I wis towld ta come here. Ye see, dir a freend o mine, an mi douchter Mary, its gettin hats here, an of coorse dey hev ta get my opeenion on dem, an I wis ta com alang at twal o'clock ta see hoo da hats did."

"Oh, yes; I see," said the girl, who had some difficulty in keeping a straight face. "I'll go upstairs and see."

During the time of waiting, the P. M. had a look round the shop. "Heth, da weemen shurly needs nothin dey canna get here, baith inside an oot."

In a minute the girl was back.

"Are you Mr Laurenson?"

"Yiss, my name is Jerry Laurenson, frae Eshaness; wan o dis Paet Commission, ye kno."

"Oh, then, it's all right. Two young ladies have been waiting for you for some time. Step this way, please."

Taking off his wide-a-wake, and putting it under his "oxter," the P.M. followed the girl upstairs and was ushered into the milliners' room.

"Heth, ye hae plenty o lookin-glasses here, at ony rate, whatever else ye hae. Yiss, yiss, gie da weemen hats an glesses an dresses, an dats aa dey want. Tho of coorse—"

"Are you aware that you have kept us waiting for twenty minutes," asked the Tittie.

"Weel, I im a coarn late, I will say, bit raelly I,—raelly I—I—couldna help it."

"Fudge! I believe you're been in the Grand Hotel playing billiards."

"Weel, weel, ye kno; weel—"

"Don't attempt to deny it. Your face gives you away. And we standing here waiting for half-an-hour."

"Weel, dat wid only gie ye more time ta look at your hats. Oh, fur dis weemen in dir hats, as I'm said, noo-a-days. Feth, Betty hed juist wan bonnet fur da first ten year efter we mairred, an a mutch noo an dan. Bit noo! hits hats, hats, hats. Da lasses hae ta hae a hat noo fur every saeson o da year, an dat doesna dü dem. Noo, dat pits me in mind o da stoary aboot da man an da Bible. Did I ever tell ye dat stoary, my jewel?"

"No," said the Tittie, somewhat mollified, for she loved to hear Jerry telling stories.

"Weel, ye kno, it wis in da owld days whin not mony men in Shetlan, an, I may say no weemen could read even print, let alon write. Weel, da minister, you see, wis wint ta geng among da folk an catakeese dem—an expund da Scriptir ta dem. Wan day he cam till a toon whaar wan o da men gae oot at he could read, an he gude inta da hoose, bit he saw no signs o a Bible. 'Weel, John,' he says, 'I hope you

read the Bible regularly.' 'Da Bible! Certainly I read da Bible. I read da Bible i da saeson.' 'In its season, John? In its season?' 'Yiss, in its saeson. Whin da time comes roond I read da Bible, certainly.' 'But, John, the Bible is always in season.' 'Weel, dat micht be sae wi ony Bible you brought; bit wi dis dirt an trash ye buy i da shop, at dey caa da Bible, ta tell you da Loard's truth, sir, its not safe. Its not safe ta do it. If ye'll bring me a richt Bible I'll read her aa da time.' Of coorse," added Jerry, "he pat it dis wye ta get oot o a corner, fur deil wurd could he read ava."

"And you tell the story to get *yourself* out of a corner too, because you cannot explain why you are so late," said the Tittie, after a hearty laugh. "Oh, you men, we know you; poor, weak-kneed creatures that you are. We know you."

"Dat's aa richt my jewel. What aboot da hats? Dats da point een noo, I understand."

"The hats are all right. Mary and I have selected each a nice hat, with the assistance of the milliner, who says they suit us admirably. We think so too. What do you think of this?" And with a few deft touches the Tittie adjusted the hat, and turned round and faced the P. M. The milliner was greatly amused at the whole proceedings, but having been let into the "secret," maintained her gravity while entering into the fun.

"No doobt da millner kens her wark an knos what shu's sayin, bit I don't agree wi edder wan or da idder o you. Da hat is no bad, bit its ower uplifted i da croon, an warse as dat it hoids yon boanie peerie curl ipu your left broo. We can't hae da Tittie

ithoot her curl, ye kno, hat or no dat. I wid redder hae da bare head."

"Get along," said the Tittie, who, all the same, was not ill-pleased at Jerry's remarks. "How would this do?" putting the hat further back on her head, so as to allow more of the curl to be seen.

"Not at aal. It pits me in mind o da wye at Maikie Dennelson würe his sou' wester—away back ower his head. Yon'll not dü at aal."

"We might take away some of the trimming and this bunch of flowers from this side," said the Tittie.

"If you do that, you spoil the hat," said the milliner.

"Its better ta spoil da hat dan ta spoil da woman. Ye can shune get a hat, bit ye'll no get a Tittie every day."

"Be quiet, silly," said the individual referred to.

"I'm not so sure about that," said the milliner. "A hat is not so easily made, and they're very dear. There's plenty of girls knocking about—"

"Dearer still," broke in the P. M., with a laugh, "in more wyes dan wan. Weel, my dear, aa I can say is da hat is not what I wid laek at aal. Ye'll hae ta try somethin else, I assure you. I'll go da lent o ten shillings more ta get a thing it'll set you aff."

"Of course ten shillings would make a good difference," put in the milliner.

"Weel, ye'll hae ta try your haand again, I assure you. Yon hat 'ill dü weel anof fur onyeen at hes nae left broo curl."

"I suppose we will have to do something to please his majesty, although I am sure I like the hat well enough. And what about Mary's, I wonder?"

Will it not meet with approval, I wonder?"

"Dat remains ta be seen. It aa depends."

Mary adjusted her hat, and presented herself to her father for inspection.

"Howld dee head doon an dan look up." Mary did so. "I toucht dat. No, shu'll not do. It spoils dee boanie up-look,—da up-look at du got fae me, I can tell dee. Da lasses, ye ken," Mr L. said, addressing the milliner, who was not altogether pleased at these strictures, "aa took efter me i da look, ye kno, an da boys efter da midder."

"That's very often the case. Nice-looking girls you have, if this is a specimen."

"Yiss, dir ower weel. Bit I widna say, though, at Mary is sae weel-lookin as Meggie. No. Dat's wan o da mairred eens. An da boys is no ill-lookin edder. Betty wis a good lookin lass. I can tell you, whin we mairried. No, no, Mary, du canna hae dee uplook spoiled. Da hat 'ill edder hae ta be aalterd or anidder een made, wan wye or idder. Shu comes ower far doon ower dee broo, an heth, I tink shu's skave too. Bit as fir dat, no human bein in dis universe could tell, fur da lasses noo-a-days hae dir hats ipu dir heads in every form it wan can imagine. Wan time its flat, nixt time its ta wan side, dan ta da idder, dan its back awer, dan its front ower, dan its sticken up, dan its clatched doon. So aboot skave I'll say nothin. Bit shu'll not do. I towld you dat. Ye don't hae da sense ta cled yoursells richt. An what aboot da frocks? Dey'll be a wark aboot dem, I kno."

"Well, I suppose we will have to do something with these hats, to please his lordship," said the Tittie to the milliner.



"Oh, I think we'll manage. We'll make an effort, at any rate."

"We have to go into another room about the dresses. Come along and see the style we have selected. What do you think of this," asked the Tittie, holding up a fashion plate.

"Yon! Yon! Ye don't mean ta tell me ye hae schoiced yon aafil-lookin thing?"

"Certainly we have. This is the very latest fashion."

"Weel, dan, da very latest fashion is not fit fur a respectable woman, dat's aal. Woman, ye'll not be half cled if ye pit da laek o yon on you. Dan dir nedder shape or form ipu da thing. Fur aa da eart it pits me in mind o wan ats tean a lent o stuff an begun at da shudders an wupid it aroond da boady ta da waist an dan lattin da rest hing onywy. No, no; yon, yon. Dir nae fulness, at da weemen used ta spaek aboot, wi da thing. An da bits o sleeves pits me in mind o a peerie bairns frock, aboot half a dizzen inches doon ower da airm. An dan its sae skrimpid. No human bein could dance wi da laek o yon—you hae nae room ta move your feet. Dan its far ower short. Paal says at a woman's glory is her hair, noo yere makin it her feet. Don't ye go by da Scriptir, my jewel, even wi your dress. Yon! Raelly, raelly, I don't know what dis world is comin til."

"You don't expect us to go to a wedding, or to anything else, dressed like old guys of fifty years ago, do you? Perhaps you would like us to go in crinolines?"

"I don't want you ta mak fules o yoursells edder

wan wye or da idder. I want you baid ta be daecent, an tasty, an richt, dats aall. Wi da laek o yon you're not. If Betty saw Mary in a frock laek yon, shu widna get ower it; in fak shu widna lat her go. Betty haes sense, ye kno; soond sense in mony wyes. An as fur da rest o da company, if ye twa bruke in ipu dem wi yon, da weddin widna go on—da folk wid be sae taen up glowerin at you at dey wid hae time fur naethin else. Couldna ye get somethin a kind o a cross atween da crinoline in da laek o dis, whin da crinoline cam doon a bit an da floonces cam in? Feth, I'm seen da weemen floonced fae tap ta tae, yiss, every bit, sleeves an aa. Dan dey wir cled, ye kno; dey wir cled. Heth, we men knew dat too, fur I'm heard dem sayin it took up ta twinty yairds o stuff ta mak a frock fit ta go ta da kirk wi. Ah, yiss, dan wis da days. I mind hearin o a man at made oot at da floonces on his wife's frock wis anof shewed end to end ta geng roond da whole o dir byre. Oh, yiss, dat wis da days."

"Well, that was sheer waste, and very ridiculous. Now, we are simply not going to make ourselves silly, and if we can't get a style of dress suitable, we'll not go to the wedding at all. We're not living in eighteen hundred and sixty; we're living in nineteen hundred and seventeen."

"Yiss, an seeventeen ye ir, fur aa da wit ye hae. Weel, I don kno. Ir dey nothin else bit yon thing? Dere's somethin, noo. Dir more shape an more stuff dere, an it haes a kind o floonce too, here an dere. Dats more laek it, noo."

"That's a hideous thing. I wouldn't put it on."

"Can ye get naethin wi a gore in it? I'm heard

da weemen spaekin aboot makin her wi a gore."

"Gore! You don't know what you are speaking about. You're talking through your hat."

"My jewel, my hat is not on, so dats not possible. Weel, I don kno. I don't kno what ta say. Ye'll hae ta get somethin ta plaese yoursells and plaese me too, an dat'll not be aesy. Bit yon 'ill no dü, dats shure. Ah! da crinoline days wis da days, mi boys! If you'd seen Betty in her crinoline, da nicht shu mairied—"

"And what like were you?"

"Me? Oh, feth, I wis weel ta be seen too. My whisker wis juist growing, ye kno, an da upper lip wisna fairly covered, bit shu wis aall richt, juist as da Loard made her, a boanie kind o broonie-yellow, an my hair wis kind o black an curly. I assure you da lasses toucht Betty hed don weel whin shu got a howld o me."

"What did the men think about you and Betty?"

"Oh, feth, dey toucht da sam. I took her oot afore against a half-a-dizzen o dem. A fine-lookin lass wis Betty, I can tell you. Dan whin shu wis dressed up going ta da kirk, der wisna a woman i da perishin at could hould a caandle till her, as da sayin is. Oh, dear-a-dear! I see dem yet. Sax neebirs, an aboot a dizzen weemen wid set oot fur da Hoose o da Loard on a Sunday moarnin. Ta see dem meetin an goin ower da gaet taggedder wis a sicht. Da crinaline, ye kno, took up some room, an shu at could spread da most canvas, as ye wid say, wis da woman. Some could spread more canvas as Betty, bit non could kerry it so weel. Feth, shu kerried a a braw lok, fur ye couldna get near her whin shu hed

it on. Dat wis da warst aboot da crinaline. If ye got a lass ipu your knee wi a crinaline on, feth, it needit navigation. What wis meent ta be aa roond aboot, aa went ta wan side, stickin up laek a herring bow i da sea. An dan ta see dem tryin ta get inta da saets i da kirk! Loard love me, as only tree could get inta wan saet, an dey hed ta tak da thing i dir haands an shuve it afore dem afore dey could enter. Dan dir Paisley plaids an dir bonnets. A woman wis some size dan; noo shu's wupid in mair laek a mummy as onything else. A daecent faimily dan a days needid twa saets, yiss, an sometimes tree. Dat wis da days; dat wis da days!"

"Yes, but we are living in these present days, not fifty years ago. So far as I have seen, these crinolines were hideous, ungainly things. I wonder that any woman put them on. The point is, what are we going to do? The dresses have to be made, and there is not much time now."

"Dat is true. Dis poor dressmaakers 'ill hae a job wi you afore dir don, I kno. If dir ony folk ipu da face o dis eart at I peety, its da dressmaakers. Da wark at dey hae, ta shape dis bits o things ipu weemen's backs, is anof ta pit a person oot o dir judgmint. Look at da—"

"Oh, never you mind that. The dressmakers know their work. The style of dress has to be settled now—immediately."

"Weel, da floonces wisna sae bad whin dey cam in. Ye could get a coarn nearer till a lass wi dem. An dan da bustle wisna ill-becomin. Hae ye nothin wi a floonce an a bustle?"

"Oh, go away. Go and play billiards till dinner

time, or do anything you like. We'll select our own dresses, as I said before. You're too ancient altogether," and the Tittie took Jerry by the shoulders and pushed him out of the room.

As the P. M. went down stair and put on his hat, he said to himself, "Man, dir no plaesin o dis weemen. Non. Non at aall. Ye gie dem money ta spend, an whin ye go an shaw dem hoo ta du it wi wisdom an sense, dey wont hev it. Weel, I kno wan thing, if Mary comes hom wi da laek o yon, hir midder 'ill huve it i da fire. I kno dat. Feth, dis weddin is goin ta be a weddin afore shu's don, wan wye an anidder."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

The Tittie leads the P. M. into a "boanie expense."

"I have to speak to you rather seriously on a certain matter," said the Tittie to the P. M., the same afternoon. They were sitting in Jerry's ludgin. Mary had taken Joanie out for a run, and when the Tittie called she found the P. M. alone, enjoying a smoke after dinner.

"An what may dat be, my jewel?"

"I was along at the Queen's this afternoon; in fact I have just come from there. Of course I met Miss G., Madam, as you call her, and we were talking of one thing and another. She made some remarks about you which I did not like, and which I gave her a bit of my mind about, but at the same time some thngs she said I considered right enough."

"Da trukker. I wid expec nothin else fae her. An what wis shu sayin about me?"

"Oh well, it wasn't so much about you personally, as about what she called your class, you know. She was turning up her nose about the working class, throwing out hints about crofters being closely associated with gentlemen in such an important thing as a Commission; and saying that really people should know their place and keep it, and all that sort of thing. But—"

"Dat fae da laek o her! - Dat fae a wheeper-



snapper ats only com oot o da ert, as I may say, an gotten a kind o skin eddication ; da kind at harly gies her da sense ta keep hersell oot o da fire. Dan shu faas inta dis job becaas some fule laek hersell gets her shuverd intil it, becaas shu wears high heels on her buits an gengs aboot lookin as if da world belanged till her. An aa shu can du is ta penk hersell wi dress an tink shu's better as da laeks o me ats laabired an toiled aa me life an brought up a faimly. An what can shu dü? Nothin at I ken o at a bairn couldna du as weel. Shu's juist laek aa idder upstarts. Wirkin class! Feth, I'll wirkin her!"

"You're too sensible to let such silly remarks disturb you. Some people have a way of saying nasty things. I suppose they can't help it. But there were some other things she said which I was rather inclined to approve of."

"Oh! An what wir dey?"

"Well, she said, you know, that really to see one of the Commission going about dressed as a common crofter—"

"Weel. Imna I a coamon crofter?"

"You have been, and no doubt to a certain extent you are yet, a crofter ; but you are more than that. You are a member of His Majesty's Peat Commission."

"Weel, imna I duin da wark o da Commission? Ir dey ony wan don onythin aboot it excep meself?"

"She wasn't talking about the work, and neither am I. That's not the thing she was driving at."

"What wis it, dan?"

"It's about your appearance."

"Oh, my appearance? An what's wrang wi my

appearance? Ir dey onything strange aboot me?"

"Well, she thinks, and I rather think with her, that you might dress a little more becoming your new station."

"Du you? Dan in your opeenion appearance is mair ta be toucht o as wark?"

"Not altogether; but there is a decency in dress as well as in everythiug else."

"Weel, imna I daecintly dressed?"

"You are decently dressed as a crofter but not as a member of a Commission."

"I see. Juist so. As lang as ye're weel dressed dan ye're aa richt. Dats your opeenion. It maitters no whedder da wark ye're paid fur is don or not don."

"I don't say that. A certain amount of work has to be done, of course. But suitable dress is demanded by the Government of their employees. It is not dignified to go about in a style which does not impress. The great majority of people are impressed, you know, by the dress one wears."

"I suppose dey ir. Da more fules dey. Of coorse, da most o da folk in dis world is fules, dats what I'm come ta tink efter livin in her fur sixty year. Git dressed up, wear fine claes an be able ta lay aff, an alto da head be as empty as a drum, an ye hae as muckle wit as a hen, ye'll be lookid up till. I niver fell doon afore fine claes i mi life, an I'm no gaen ta begin noo. I believe in wark. Da wark hes ta be don, an fine claes an blow 'ill no du it."

"Yes, but there is no reason why a man who works should not dress with care and taste. Care and taste are evidence of refinement of mind, and you have that naturally in you, and it is only right

that visible expression should be given to it. Now, will you tell me how much you have spent on dress since you were appointed a member of this Commission?"

"I boucht a pair o new buits, an a bag, an a wide-a-wake hat, an twa collars. An I wear mi Sunday strood. What mair du ye want? I'm no gaen aboot dressed up laek a peacock."

"Nobody wishes you to go about dressed up like a peacock. But if you will reflect a moment, you will come to see that when you are among the others, you look different—a little out of keeping, if I may say so."

"An so I am different. I'm da wan at kens da wark. Dey don't."

"My dear friend, you place too great a value on work. You don't seem to understand that what the Government look for in a thing like this is not so much a lot of work as a fine report with a lot of words."

"An hoo can you mak a report ithoot duin da wark?"

"That's easy. That's what the literary member is for. We go here and there, hold meetings, examine witnesses, get practically the same information every place we go, take as much time over it as possible; take notes, get a lot of figures, put them in tables,—the more tables the better—present a mass of details which no one reads and no one cares about, and get notices in the newspapers to the effect that 'it is evident from the voluminous and exhaustive Report just issued—the first, we understand, of a series—that the Peat Commission appointed by H.M.

Government has done its work in a very thorough and painstaking manner. When the series is completed the fullest information regarding this most important industry will be available to everyone interested.' That's how the thing is done."

"Bit dat looks ta me more laek chaetery as onything else. An somebody hes ta pay fur it."

"I wouldn't call it that. There's no need to call things by nasty names. We are just doing what everyone else is doing. And as for paying, the Government has plenty of money, and I don't see why we shouldn't get a share of what's going."

"Feth, dat's true anof. Dir poorin oot da money laek watter. Whaar dey get it fae da Loard alon knows. Weel, if dats aa ats wanted, its aesy anof. Aa ye hae ta dü is ta get claes an rin aboot da place an look big. I can dü dat as weel as anidder."

"That's more sensible, now. When in Rome you have to do as the Romans do, you know. Of course we have to do something."

"Feth, I'll mak ye aa dü somethin, I'se see ta dat. I'll not chaet da Governmint aatagedder, fules as dey ir. Ye'll no hae it aa fun, if Jerry lives."

"I have a list of things here which I consider you need, and that immediately. I would like to see you as well dressed as any of them, for as a matter of fact you are as good looking."

"Oh, I kno I'm as weel ta be seen as da rest o da crood, bit I don kno if I can kerry it aff as weel. Mi head is not empty anof, ye kno."

"We'll soon get your head empty, then you'll acquire the style. To begin with, you will have to get two new suits—"

"Twa suits? What fur? I can only wear wan at a time."

"That's where you make the mistake. You should have on a different suit every other day. The clothes last longer, and keep their shape better that way. Don't you notice that Madam and I never appear two days running in the same dress?"

"I daarsay. Bit I'm not a woman."

"But you should be more like a woman. Dress with taste, and always with an eye to beauty."

"Feth, my eye is been more direkid ta gettin somethin ta pit i da mooths o Betty an da bairns, as penkin wirsells up wi claes."

"You're past that stage now. You have some means, and it is a duty you owe to yourself, your family, and the nation, to dress in a proper style."

"Da wages is not bad. I'm said dat afore. What neist?"

"A greatcoat, a dust coat, a waterproof, and a good quality of oilskin."

"Woman, you're not wise. You're daft. In the name o Him at made wis both, what's da need fur aa yon?"

"You need the greatcoat for cold weather, the dust coat for medium weather, the waterproof for showers, and the oilskin for heavy rain. You can't deny that all these different kinds of weather occur in Shetland?"

"I don't deny dat, as I ken ta mi cost. I hae a aald oilskin hom, though, at I used ta geng ta da fishin wi, an a owld top-cot I'm hed fur thirty year."

"That would never do. Your clothes must be fresh and of the latest style. Then you need two

pairs of leggings, two more pairs of boots, two dozen collars—”

“Woman, du ye tink at I’m goin ta live for evermore? Twa dizzen o collars! I don’t tink I’m hed dat whantity o collars aa da time I’m been ipu da face o dis ert.”

“You must put on a clean collar every day—”

“Wance a week, ye mean?”

“I mean nothing of the kind. A gentleman is known by his linen as much as by anything.”

“Bit I’m no a jantleman.”

“Yes, you are. In every true essential you are a gentleman, and you have to dress like one—at least during the life of the Peat Commission. Then you must get a dozen ties of different kinds, and two or three hats—”

“Heeven help me! You’ll hae me ruined; fairly on da Board. I canna staand up ta aa yon.”

“Oh, yes, you can. I have a shrewd idea what your salary is, and I know well enough you can afford to get things to put you in line with the others. You must recollect you do not need to get this every week. The ‘rig-out,’ as you call it, will do for some time.”

“Hit wid need, in feth! I don’t kno about dis at aall. I don kno. I never looked fur dis. Atween da money I sent home ta Betty an da boys first, an dan Betty’s an Mary’s things, and your rig-oots, an da boy’s strood, an da billards, an da ludgin, an aa da rest o it, I’ll be on mi beam ends, aless I draw da rest of mi wharter’s selery. If Betty kent da onkerry at wis goin on wan wye an anidder, shu wid be fur bindin. I’ll be faered ta go hom. I’m nearly dat



already, atween da boy an da billards. I don kno. I don kno. What'll be da price o aa yon truck?"

"The price! Never mind the price. It's easily within the reach of your pocket, I know that. I want to see you dressed in such a way as will give no cause for the enemy to blaspheme. I mean so that Madam has nothing to say."

"Da high-heeler! Limmer at she is. I'll wirkin-class her. Turnin' up her bit o a snub nose at folk shu's not fit ta be a servant till. I'll settle da hissy."

"Come along. I know a shop where you can get most of the things you need. A woman's taste, you know, in these things is essential."

"Dir some o dir taste no muckle wirt, perteeclarly wi dir hats."

"Oh, go along. By the bye, we got two lovely gowns, and they are to be ready in good time."

"Weel, I doot baid da wan statement an da idder. Fur lovely, if yon wis a sample at I saw da day, hits harly fur a human bein', an as fur bein ready in time, da thing is oot o da whestin; ye hae sae mony backdraws an alterin at da objects o dress-maakers canna get da thing don. Of coorse, I'll get twa ready-made suits at twa pound ten apiece."

"Ready-made suits! You don't mean to say you would insult the British Legislature by wearing a ready-made suit. No, no; I am looking after you now, you must remember, and I am going to see, as you said to us, that you are decently cled."

Having got the P. M. into a shop, the Tittie practically took matters into her own hands. It so happened that the clothier had in stock an excellent greatcoat of the very kind required—a misfit, which,

however, fitted Jerry as if it were made for him. With the other coats they were equally successful. She selected the ties and the collars; and came to remember that half-a-dozen white shirts and the same number of soft shirts had been omitted from the list. These were added, with a remark that studs, etc., would be got from the jeweller's. Hats, and all that could be got from the one shop, were tried on, disapproved, tried again, and added to the goodly pile. The shopkeeper thought this was one of the most charming young ladies he had ever met, for she purchased with a fine freedom. Doubts once or twice crossed his mind in regard to the question of payment, but a casual remark he overheard about the Peat Commission set his mind to rest.

"Noo, is dir onything under da canopy o Heeven at you want more?" asked the P. M., pathetically.

"There's a very important thing I had forgotten—a very important thing indeed. One, in fact, will not do. I mean a suit case."

"We have some splendid suit cases, ma'am, from three pound ten to six pound ten each."

"Let's see them, please."

With alacrity the goods were displayed.

"You will need both, I assure you. Your clothes will be spoiled if you attempt to crush them into one of these. In fact, the thing couldn't be done. That's about all we can get here, I think."

"Noo, fur mercy sake lat me ken what aa dis comes till. I'll be oot o mi judgmint afore I get clear o dis toon."

After a little figuring, the shopkeeper presented his bill with a half apologetic air.

"Thirty-one, five, six," said the Tittie, "I thought it would have been more. It's wonderful how much you get for a comparatively small sum."

"Thirty-wan pound fur claes fur wan man! Loard haad His haand about me. Mony a year I'm no earned dat muckle fur every rewhirement o da faimly. Weel, I can't pay it aa in cash. I don't hae da money on me."

"You can come along later in the evening with the money," said the shopkeeper.

"No, I'll no du dat. I don't laek ta tak onything oot o a strange shop ithoot peyin fur it. I hae ten pound at I can gie you, an I'll gie da rest o it wi a cheque. I'm wan o dis Paet Commission, ye see."

"Oh, that's all right. I'll just receipt the account. Let me see. We'll make it thirty, five, six. Thanks very much (scanning the cheque, which he saw was on a local bank, carefully). Where shall we send the things?"

"Ye can juist keep dem here afore I tell you. (Addressing the Tittie)—I'll hae ta tell da woman ta mak ready fur aa dis. Dill not be room i da hoose."

"No fear. She'll make room."

"Thirty pound! An fur meself alon! Dats mair as your tree rig-oots an da boy's strood an da billards tü."

"Yes, and you're not done yet, my friend. You have your boots to get and your leggings, and your suits, and a little jewellery besides."

"Weel, weel, I'm afore da wind, dats aa. Whin a man is driven afore da wind wi a woman, da Loard hae mercy ipun him, fur shu hes non."

"Now, I'll come and select your studs and sleeve-

links for you, and then I'll leave you. The other things you can get for yourself. Only, I would like to see the cloth you choose for your suits. And for goodness sake, get decent boots—a heavy pair and a light pair."

Taking the P. M. as a mother a child, the Tittie and he brought up at a jeweller's shop, where two pound ten was "launched oot," before she was satisfied. Leaving him at the shoemaker's, saying she would see him at the Pictures later on, she went home to tea, completely satisfied with her afternoon's labour.

An interview at the shoemakers resulted in an account for £4 15/-.

"Heth, do ye kno, sir, at my ready money is don. I only hae twartree shillins left. Bit I can gie you a cheque."

"Oh, that'll likely be right enough. Is the cheque on a local bank?"

"Weel, it's wan o da bank's i da toon. See you," taking out and showing a fat cheque book.

"You're living in the town?"

"Oh, yiss, yiss. I'm ludgin wi a woman—I canna mind her name—in a clos—what du dey caa it? somethin laek Chromit—"

"Oh, Chromate Lane. Well, if you will leave your name—"

"Oh, I can du dat. My name is Jerry Laurenson, wan o dis Paet Commission."

"I see. That'll be all right likely. Perhaps you're the P. M.—the Practical Member himself."

"Weel, I'm heard dat mentioned. Of coorse da idders kno nothin aboot paets. Bit dey'll learn, nae

doot, true time. Four pound fifteen, ye say. Heth, dis money does go. Bit, do ye kno, a cheque book is a very haandy thing. Whin ye hae nae money, ye can juist write oot a cheque. So, I'll juist tak da buits wi me."

"We can send the parcel along to-morrow forenoon."

"Na, ye needna budder. I'm kerried mair as dis i mi day. So, gude nicht wi you," and taking the bulky parcel, the P. M. went out and steered for the tailor's. Here he found that a month would elapse ere he could get two suits made, and the cost of a good material, made to measure, would be nine pounds.

"No, no, dis'll not do, I'll hae ta see da Tittie aboot dis. If shu wants me dressed lack da idders, I'll hae ta get ready-mades. Der good anof, I'm sure. Dan look at da price! Nine pound! An I'm spent theerty-seeven da day already. Nine mair wid mak forty-six. Naar fifty pound. No, no; lat me get hom an hae a cup o tac, fur mercy sake."

While Jerry was sitting reading the war news next morning after breakfast,—he and the bairns and the Tittie had all been at the Pictures the night before,—the landlady came in with a letter. "Dis is fur you," she said.

"Weel, it's not fac Betty. Dats wan mercy," said the P. M., eyeing the superscription. Opening it, he read that the "Agent of the Bank wished to call Mr Laurenson's attention to the fact that his account at the Bank was overdrawn to the extent of £15 6s 9d, and he hoped Mr Laurenson would give the matter his immediate attention."

After reading this missive twice over, the P. M.

took his pipe from his mouth, and muttered—"Heth, dat's aesy don. Dir plenty o cheques left. I'll juist go ower at wance an gie da man what he wants. I'll better write it oot noo, though. I dunna laek writin i da banks. Lat me see noo. He says he wants fifteen sax an ninepence. Dan I hae ta pey fur da twa suits. Dat'll be aboot seeven pound, we sall say. Dat maks aboot twenty-two. Dan da ludgin. Dan extrees. Dan da boy's strood. An heth, ye don't kno what Mary wants yet. I tink I'll write her oot fur forty-five. Dat'll gie da man what he wants an me aboot thirty pound ready clink. Dat shurly ought ta dü, even in Lerrick."

The cheque having been filled up and signed, the P. M. got his hat and his stick, and complacently sallied forth to interview the agent of the bank. "Very haandy things dis cheques, min, I most say," he muttered.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

The P. M. "doesna laek da wy'es o dis Banks at all.

Dey hae nae faith—non."

"I got a letter fae da bank dis mornin," said the P. M. to a pleasant-looking young man inside the counter.

"Yes."

"He wis sayin he wis wantin fifteen pound, six an ninepence ta square da account."

"I believe that is the amount. We will soon see." And turning up and examining the ledger, the accountant came back and said that that was the exact amount.

"Weel, I'm brought alang a cheque fur forty-five pound. Dat 'ill gie you what you want, an laeve me aboot therty pound. I'll tak da money in dis new peerie nots."

"But, my dear sir," said the accountant, who seemed to be highly amused at this way of liquidating an overdraft, "we want money—hard cash."

"Ye want money? No, it's me at wants da money. An dere's a cheque fur it. I need da money. Mi money is don."

"A cheque is not money."

"I know it's not money, bit it's a wye o payin money, an a wye o gettin money. See you. Doesna dis cheque say, 'Pay to Jeremiah Laurenson, forty-

five pound?' Weel, pey it. Dat's aall I'm askin. Whin you gie me da forty-five, I'll gie you da fifteen."

"But there are no funds, no money to pay with."

"No money ta pey wi! Raelly, I don't understand you. Der tree or fower hunder pound yonder, as far as I can see."

"Yes, but that's not your money."

"I'm no carin wha's money it is, sae far as I get it."

"You don't seem to understand that you can't draw out more money out of the bank than what you put in. The bank has been very generous, and has honoured your cheques to the extent of fifteen pound odd more than you had in, simply because it knew you were a member of the Peat Commission."

"What in Heeven's name ir ye here fur, dan? Ye gae me—at least, ye sowld me,—a cheque book, an noo whin I want ta use it ye winna lat me. Ye want money fae me, an I toucht I could get money fae you."

"You'll get money from us if you give it to us first."

"Whaar's da sense o dat? I micht as weel keep it in mi nown possession."

"Yes, but it's very handy to have money in the bank that you can draw when you want."

"Yiss, bit its more haandy ta be able ta draa whin you hae nothin in. An dan juist pit in as a body can manige."

"Banks couldn't go on like that, you know."

"I don kno. I see nothin ta stop you. Hae ye nae faith?"

"Banks don't believe in faith. They believe

in works only — particularly in hard cash."

"Weel, aall I can say is at da man or da folk at don't hae faith is not followin oot da Scriptir, an dir on da rod dat laeds ta perdition. If dir nae faith in dis world dir not much left. Ye banks is far waar is da merchants i da country. Feth, dey hed faith, an dey hae it yit, a lock o dem. Ye hed nothin ta dü bit go till a shop an git a bow o mael or flooer, an mony a thing besides, an if ye didna hae da money, ye towld dem ta mark it. An dey markid it. It micht staand fur sax mont, or a year, an maybe more, an sometimes, in a anterin case, fur evermore; bit wan wye an anidder dey got troo. Dey got dir money i da lang run, or dey got da maist o it; an if dey lost a shillin or twa noo an dan, dey made up in idder wyes. Dey niver go bankroop. At laest, its not ofen. Dir wis wan man at I kent o at said he wis bankroop, bit naebody believed him, an nedder did I, fur da day efter da place wis shut up I saw a cheque book, wi mi nown eyes, i da shop half a inch tick. Na, na, dey uswilly get troo, becaas dey hev faith, ye see."

"The banks don't work on that principle at all."

"What principle du ye wirk ipun, dan?"

"We just give out what we get in, unless the money lies for a time, then it draws interest."

"Dan ye mak your profit oot o idder folk's money? Is dat da wye o it?"

"We have to make a profit some way, you know, otherwise we couldn't carry on."

"An what interest du ye gie?"

"Three per cent. Three pounds for every hundred."

"Every mont?"

"Once a year."

"Tree pound fur a hunder pound wance a year! Heth, your faith is no muckle wirt, an your warks is is aa richt, fur yoursells. Na, na; shuner as dat, I'se buy an sell kye an sheep. Der more profit in dat. Tree pound fur twal mont! Weel, what am I ta do? Ye winna gie me money, an I hae non, an I need a lock dis very meenit. I'm on da rocks. Dis Lerrick is a aafil place."

"Couldn't you get an advance on your salary?"

"I'm hed dat afore, an I don't laek ta aks it again. Bit I suppose dir nothin else fur it. Da head clerk is here, an I can go an see him. Bit I don't laek it. Could ye no mark yon twartree pounds an gie me da thirty till da end o da wharter?"

"I'm sorry. But I'm afraid not. It's against our principles."

"Your principles is da kind at ye read aboot. I don't laek dem at aal. I'm no blamin you. Your laekly only kerryin oot oarders. Bit it's a terrible thing ta tink at banks is whaet aa duin wi faith. Dey'll niver prosper. I widna say at dey sood laanch oot money ta every man at cam an aksd fur it; bit ta pervide a cheque book ta wan o da Govermint laek mesell, an dan refuse ta pey whin da cheque says 'pey,' is more as I can get at. Weel, I'll geng alang an look fur dis clerk, an see what he hes ta say. So, gude day ta you."

"Good day."

As Jerry stepped out of the bank and made his way south along Commercial Street, minus the thirty pounds he expected to be jingling in his pockets or

snugly lying in his pocket book, his soliloquy was not of a nature complimentary to the inhabitants of the "Prettiest Town in All the Land."

"I don't laek da principles o dis people at aal. Dere's dis banks, fur wan thing. Look at da wye dey go on. Gein oot cheques an dan refusin ta pey dem. Fae what wan reads i da papers—it's not muckle I do read in dat wye, bit I read wan noo an dan—ye wid tink at da nation couldna get on or move a fit ithoot da banks, an dat hit wis da banks at keepid da nation goin. Feth, as far as I can mak oot, it's da idder wye aboot. It's da folk at keeps da banks goin. Dan look at aa da idder deevilry an helliry ats goin on i da place. Billards and dances an ongoin an consorts every day maistlins, forby aa da rest o it. An fur da money! Loard save me! Never spaek. Nae winder at Betty widna set a fit in it. Shu knows. Alto I don't know hoo shu knows, excep a sort o instink at dis weemen hes, fur shu's not been i da place fur twinty year. Da weemen hes more sense as ye wid tink, sometimes. Dey know, or dey feel, I don't know what ye wid caa it,—more as wis men dü aboot locks o things, alto, of coorse, dir locks o things dey know nothin aboot, an niver will, an don't want ta know. Weel, weel, I suppose dis da Wheen's. I winder if da clerk is aboot."

Enquiry elicited the information that there were in the billiard room two gentlemen and a boy, one of whom answered the P. M.'s description.

Ushered into the room, he found the two clerks and the boy engaged in a game of billiards.

"The very ticket," said the imp. "Here's the P. M., the man who does nothing but work. Now,

see here, you and I will challenge these two for a foursome. Five shillings on the game."

"Boy, I canna play. An if I could, bet I'll not. Dat's wan thing I wont do."

"All right. Never mind. Come on. We'll sail through them. Here's a fine cue for you."

"Boy, boy, boy. I—I don't tink at I can faa tū ta dis at aal. I wis come ipu anidder aerand aatagedder."

"Oh, blow the errand. Never mind the errand. Have a bit of fun. Life is short, time is fleeting ; and the— yes, never mind. They have to break. A hundred up. Oh, ho—! They've left a glorious opening. I see something here. Shall I begin for our side?"

"Dat du can. I'll staand by."

"Thirty-five, I think that was. Our side for ever. It's all up. I'll see to the marking."

After the principal clerk had run up a score of eleven, the P. M.'s turn came.

"Now, there's a nice, easy shot for you," said the boy. "Gently, now, on this side, and canon off the red."

"I don kno aboot dis, bit I'll try."

"Very near ; very near. Next time will do it." as Jerry's attempt failed to come off.

The other clerk added thirteen to the score, and, as luck would have it, left the balls in a good position for the champion.

"We ought to make two off that, I should think," said he, laying down his cigarette. Addressing himself to the work, he ran up another twenty-eight, and sat down on the seat with the air of one who had done his duty.

"I say, this will never do," said the next player. "The other side will be game before we know where we are." With a resolute face and a determination to be careful he ran up a twenty-one.

"Not bad," said the imp. "Now, sir, your turn again. A nice pot the red. Gently does it, now. Ah,—too hard," as the two balls went careening over the table after Jerry's anything but gentle stroke. "Never mind ; next time. Have a tint o the handle?"

"Tint o da haandle ! What's dat ?"

"Yes ; a drop of something."

"Weel, if ye mean a air o whisky, I hae nae objection."

The game proceeded after each had had a "tasteen," and Jerry had filled and lit his pipe.

The P. M.'s opponent added eight to the score and stopped with what sounded very like a "damn," as he missed an easy shot.

"Noo, Maikie, sail in again, an gie her sheet."

"It's not 'sheet' she wants, sir, it's coaxing ; a gentle touch on the chin, you know."

"Weel, anywye du laeks, bit keep at her. Dat's graand, noo. Ah, min, du's missed her !"

"Missed her, you say. Not much. That's not our way. See that," as the ball gently touched the other at the upper end of the table. "What's that?"

"Seventeen."

"All right. Shall I finish the game ?"

"Oh, give us a look in, for goodness sake."

"I see you're not great haands at dis game more as meself," said the P. M. bluntly to the two clerks, who did not altogether relish the "soft impeachment."

"It's not so much that, as that this imp is a crack



hand. He's lived among billiards all his life."

"He's no lived very lang. We're goin ta bet you, I see dat. Noo, I never bet in my life, an I'm no gaen ta du it, bit I waager a sixpence at we'll get da better o you."

"Well, it will not be by all that you can do, that's one thing sure."

"Maybe no. I'll maybe du me share yit, though. I wid laek ta pit doon yon red baa i da hol afore I go hom. At ony rate, if I canna play muckle, I can staand by an sing oot 'hoorah,' an 'wir side fur ever,'"

"How stands the game?" asked the boy.

"Seventy plays fifty-three."

"Is it wis ats seeventy?"

"We're seventy, sir, they're fifty-three."

"Dat's graand. I'll no loss mi sixpence."

"Don't you be too sure. I've seen many a game lost when one side was ninety-nine and the other fifty."

"Is dat so? Dear-a-dear. Ah, bit we'll gain dem; we'll gain dem."

The opposing team was looking a bit serious; and as much because the P. M. was on the other side as for anything else, they set their teeth and made an effort to get more level with them. The next player put on fourteen, which brought the scores 70, 68.

"Ah, ha, my lad; we'll run you out yet. Ninety-nine never won the game; you're not ninety-nine yet."

"We soon will be. The P. M. has to play next. Now, sir, you've got a nice fiver on now."

"I wiss I may du a wanner, far less a fiver. Ah, I—missed da blissed thing aatagedder."

"That's one for them."

"What?"

"Much obliged, mister. The score is now seventy, sixty-nine. It will soon be something more. I think that works out at eighty-five."

"Eighty-five, an wis seeventy ! Noo, boy, fur mercy sake set fae dee. I'm begun ta be faered."

"Have faith, sir ; have faith. That's the great thing in this world. Twenty-five. Now, a nice in off will make twenty-eight, and a canon will finish. Got the in off, and missed the canon. Just so. Gives you a chance to finish the game. It looks like going to be a near thing. It all depends on the next man."

The "next man" ran up the score to ninety-four, and the P. M.'s turn came.

"Now, two for us and we are game."

"What am I ta dü ?"

"Play and win."

"Bit what is ta be don ?"

"I could tell you ; but the other side would object."

"Weel, somethin hes ta be don, I suppose." Jerry was so doubtful, and excited, and ill at ease, that he made a desperate lounge at the nearest ball and sent his own over the table.

"For heaven's sake stop scoring for them, man. That's three, which makes them ninety-seven. We're done for. The game is their's, unless a miracle happens."

"Min, dis baas winna geng da wye at I want dem. Da very melishin is in dem."

The miracle did happen, for neither of the next two players scored a point. The balls lay against them, and the score stood as before. The last player, however, left the balls, much against his will, in such

a position that to miss a canon was almost impossible. The fortune of the game rested with the P. M.

“ ‘There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune,’ ” quoted the boy, who was great on poetry. “ ‘There’s the chance of your life, now. Make the canon, and your reputation is secured.’ ”

Slowly, deliberately, and with great care, Jerry took aim, and played. For the first time since he began to play, he scored. The canon was made, and the game won.

“ Hooray! hooray! ” shouted the boy. “ Three cheers for the P. M. He has won the game. The honours are on our side. Let me shake yon by the hand. Your sixpence is safe, and the enemy is routed. ”

“ Feth, I tink dat did dem. Dat’s da wye ta do it. Der nae match fur da laek o wis, I see. Dey’ll need ta practeece more. ”

“ It was a near thing, though. But you saved the situation. ”

“ Weel, I did me best. Dis is a fine game, dis billards, I see. ”

“ I told you that before. ”

“ Noo at we’re baeten dem we’ll better stop. I’ll need ta mind aboot me bit o aerand noo. ”

“ Yes, business has to be attended to occasionally, though in the case of a Commission, a great deal is not insisted on. ”

“ Dis is no so much aboot da Commission as a bit o a affair o me nown. I winder if I could spaek ta you a meenit bi yoursell? ” said the P. M. to the principal clerk.

"Most assuredly. Come this way."

"Do you know at I'm run short o money."

"There's nothing extraordinary in that. That's a disease affecting about 99 per cent. of the human race."

"Yiss, bit its very awkward, perteeclarly whin wan is in a strange place. I gued ta da bank da day wi a cheque, an, do you kno, dey widna pay it. Dey said dey hed no funds, alto I saw hunders o pounds lyin about."

"Not likely, if there were no funds belonging to yourself."

"Weel, I see no use fur dem whatever, dan. If dey winna pay da cheques at dey gie ta folk ta fill up, what sense is in it? Da merchants 'ill gie a respectable person onything dey want ithoot money mony a time, an juist wait till da person can pay. Dis banks gies nothin accep what belongs to yourself."

"You can't expect banks to give money without security?"

"Why sood a merchant gie his goods ithoot security dan? I expect da banks ta pay whin dey say 'pay,' an hae some coarn o faith in daecent folk. Bit da man i da bank—a nice chap he wis, too, considerin he wis in a bank—said at I micht aks you what I sood dü?"

"I would suggest that you get an advance on your quarter's salary. Write a note to the chairman, and post it to-night. He will authorise it right enough."

"Bit dan I couldna hae da money till Seterday."

"No. You can not."

"Dat'll never do. I only hae wan an ninepence left, fur I gae da lasses da money ta pey fur dir falde-rals as shune as I cam ta da toon, an what wis left is geen laek smok, yiss, juist laek smok. I'll tell you what we nicht dü. If you'd be as gude as ta wraet a letter ta da chairman—ye can dü da laek o dat better as I—I'll send da boy nort wi wan o da motors, an he can be back da nicht, an dan I'll hae da money da moarn."

"That's an excellent idea. You go and arrange with the boy. He'll go fast enough, after a good lunch. I'll just say that owing to unexpected calls on your exchequer—"

"Yiss, yiss; pit it onywe ye laek, sae far as he understand. I geng an see da bit o a boy, an tell him ta fin da driver, so at dey can set oot at wance."

A minute later the door opened and the P. M., putting his head in, said—

"Dir nae need fur you ta mention onything about da billards, ye ken."

"No, no. Certainly not. I wouldn't dream of such a thing. Trust me. I know what to say."

"An of coorse, dir no call ta say onything about Joanie faain ita da sea."

"Och, no. By the bye, where is 'Joanie'?"

"Heth, do ye know, I'm been sae upset dis moarnin at I couldna tell you een noo whaar he is. Bit he's aa richt. So. I'se go."

Half an hour later the imp was spinning on the road to Hillswick, alone in his glory in an Arrol-Johnson, provided with boxes of cigarettes, plenty of chocolates and other toothsome comestibles, and an abundance of literature suitable for the occasion.

Kissing his hand to every pretty girl they met on the way, full of life and fun, sans care, sans responsibility, he reflected on this ideal summer day that there might be worse things in this world than being attached to a Peat Commission.

## CHAPTER XXV.

Joanie is lost. In the midst of the search for him the P. M. receives a telegram from Betty telling him to bring the boy home at once.

As the motor rolled the imp over the north road, he thought he saw through the smoke which hangs about that vicinity, a figure which he recognised. A minute's time solved all doubts. Sure enough, this was Joanie, alone. Joanie had been out having a "surview" of the activities, the life and the bustle, the smoke and the dirt, the strange houses, the reeking kilns, the ships and boats, saw mill, and all the rest of it, at the Docks. He was profoundly impressed. He hardly imagined there were so many people, and boats and ships, in the whole world. Lerwick was a great place, he thought. Pursuing his way he had wandered as far as Gremista, and had seen all the stations and was now on the way homeward, not having any clear idea of the precise time, and not wishing to cause his parent undue anxiety.

Slowing down the car to a stop, the occupant hailed Joanie with—

"Hillo, old chap, where are you bound for?"

"I'm gaen hom," he replied, glad to recognise a face and voice among all the strangers.

"Home? I see. What do you say to a run in the motor,"



"Oh, I wid laek dat, bit what aboot faider?"

"Faider! Faider is too busy just now to think about anything. Besides, we're just going a run and straight back. Jump in. Come along. Have a cigarette? No. Here's very good chocolates. That will be more to your taste. Shake up, driver. As the old man says, 'Give her sheet.'"

And "sheet" the driver gave her, for the motor spanked along at a rate which made old women and old men jump aside, turn round, stare—and swear. "Deevil's imps," (for the driver was a beardless youth too), was the anethema most frequently heard, as the pedestrians frantically cleared out of the path of the motor to a place of safety.

"The man who invented the Peat Commission deserves well of his country," said the youth. "I yet will rear a monument to his memory. He must have been a genius, and a poet—a practical poet—withal. Know Shakespeare?"

"Shakespeare? No. We never got him."

"The man who knows not his Shakespeare knows nothing. You find lines there suitable for every occasion. Listen to this—

'Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious by the sun of York.'

Magnificent. Fits our case to a TY. We've had our winter—a wretched, rotten winter of rain and sleet, and winds and storms, and sleet and rain and storms and winds. Now is our discontent made glorious by the Peat Commissson. The elements have combined to mark the great event of this Commission being appointed, for a more glorious summer we have never had. Know Burns?"

“ Faider kens aboot Burns.”

“ Faider is a sensible man, then ;

‘ O’ a’ the airts the wind can blaw,  
I dearly lo’e the west.’

Do you know that but for the Peat Commission you would not be here, seated in a motor car, driving to the west, or rather the north-west, in this glorious weather ? ”

“ I dunna ken onything aboot it.”

“ And Keats ? ‘ A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.’ That’s the Tittie. See here, Joanie, my boy. If you say that the Tittie isn’t the sweetest, bonniest—

“ I never said onything aboot her,” said Joanie who was a bit frightened at the vehemence with which his companion addressed him.

“ — best, loveliest, winsomest girl in Shetland, or in the world, I’ll—”

“ I never—I never—”

“ Well, don’t do it again then. I’ll give anyone who denies it such a smack in the eye as will make him dream, like Richard the Third, of bloody deeds and death for a week.”

“ I dunna ken da Tittie.”

“ I do. Hullo, what’s this ? A blinkin motor broken down. Well, we won’t haul it in. Not for Joseph. I see no girls in it. Ta ta,” and waving his hand to the other driver, who stood gesticulating wildly for them to stop and render assistance, the motor sped by. “ Oh, no,” he continued, “ we are not draught horses. We are out for a run, and mean to have it too.”



After the P. M. had left the hotel, and had had a look round the Pier and Esplanade, where, however, he saw no signs of Joanie, he thought it might be as well to go to the ludgin and have some dinner. Arrived there, and entering the room, he was accosted by Mary with—

“Whaar’s Joanie?”

“Whaar’s Joanie? Weel, whaar is Joanie? Joanie I toucht wis wi dee.”

“Wi me? No, no. Dat he’s not. He’s not been wi me aa moarnin. I toucht he wis wi you.”

“Lass, hoo could du tink dat? Hoo could du tink dat? Didna I hae ta geng ta da bank, an dan go an see da Clerk aboot somethin at couldna wait? Hoo could da boy be wi me?”

“I dunna ken, I’m sure,” said Mary, who was now almost crying, “He’s maybe lost among aa dis boats, an boys, an ships an da onkerrv ats goin on here. What’ll mam say? What’ll mam say?”

“Lass, howld dee tongue, an dunna be a fule. Here he is,” as a footstep was heard on the stair. The footfall stopped at the door, and a knock was heard.

“Oh, du can come in. We’re not wantin ony mair o dee pranks.”

The door opened.

“Whaar i da ill-helt is du—”

“You’re not looking particularly brilliant to-day, you two, I must say,” said the Tittie, as she entered the room.

“It’s you, is it?”

"Yes, it is. Is there anything wrong in me coming along to see you?"

"No, no, no, no. Bit, du ye kno—"

"Joanie is lost; Joanie is lost," sobbed Mary.

"Lass, will du howld dee tongue? Du is a dereeshin. Hoo does du ken at he's lost? The fact is, you know," the P. M. said, addressing the Tittie, "at somewye or idder Joanie is gone oot, an fur some raeson or idder he's not come back."

"Then he is lost, as Mary says."

"Weel, we can harly say he's lost. We're no lookid fur him yit."

"This is a bonnie kettle of fish. Here's a how-do-ye-do. What will Mrs Laurenson say about all this? What will Betty say?"

"For Loard's sake dont mention Betty. We're a set o fules. Da best we can du is ta geng an look fur da bairn an no sit here an spaek."

"Da denner is in," said the landlady.

"You'll excuse me, mistress, bit could ye tell wis whan Joanie guid oot."

"Oot? Da dear bairn guid oot bi himsell efter you an afore Mary. I hoop ta Him at haads His haand aboot wiz aa at dir naethin happened ta da boy."

"Dir naethin happened at we ken o, bit he's juist not turned up."

"No come back! Mercy save me! Da bairn oot him lon in a place laek Lerrick! Mr Laurenson, I assure you dat's terrible. Ye'll hae aa ta geng an look high an low intil ye fin da boy. Never mind da denner. Hits nothin. I'se keep it warm till ye com back. So, jewel," (to Mary)

"he'll be aa richt. Dunna you tak on. Go ta da Pleece Office on da Pier at wance, da treesom o you, an aks ; bit fin da bairn ; bring da bairn back. What a mercy his midder is no here."

Drying her tears, Mary, assisted by the Tittie, who was almost as much concerned as herself, got up, and made herself ready to go out. The three went downstairs. Jerry was really very anxious, though he faced the situation with as bright an outward look as he could put on.

"We'll geng ta da Pleece Office first, as da woman baad wis. Dey ken everything at goes on in dis aafil bit o a toon, an Loard knows hit's a kennin to ken."

No information, however, could be obtained at the Police Office. So many boys were knocking about, both town boys and country boys, that it was a sheer impossibility to know what everyone was doing or where they were going.

"He's lost," said Mary, who persisted in this belief.

"We needn't think that, until we have made a thorough search," said the Tittie. "Let us have a look along the Esplanade, and then the street. The boy must be somewhere about. He is not a mouse. He can't hide himself utterly ; and if there had been any accident we would soon have heard of it."

"Yiss. Ye hae some sense. Ye'll geng as ye say, an I'll geng ta da Docks an dere aboot. Da boy wis aye in a aet aboot boats an ships. I'll meet you at da Market Cross in a hoor's time."

This procedure was followed, without, how-

ever, resulting in the slightest information being obtained about the object of their search.

Mary was now weeping without restraint, and her father was inwardly very ill at ease indeed.

"Mary, go hom an hae somethin ta aet dis meenit. Du's fantin. Will ye geng hame wi her?" he asked the Tittie. "I maun go ta da Pleece again, an see what dey tink sood be don. Raelly, dis is a terrible place wan wye an anidder."

Mary and the Tittie went home, not, however, to eat, but to sit silent and distraught, filled with anxious foreboding. The kindly landlady did all she could to cheer up Mary, and brought her tea and toast, which, however, she could not taste.

"Dey say dey'll hae a look aboot, an aks aboot da boy as weel as dey can," said the P. M., when he came in. "An dey say dir nae faer o him. He couldna a faen ower da pier i da daylicht ithoot someen kennin, an its very laekly at he's waandered a bit ower somewye. He'll be back, dey believe, afore tae time. Noo, we'll aa hae ta hae somethin ta aet, fur we'll hae ta geng oot an stoor aboot da place intil da boy is fun, an we canna du dat on empty staamicks."

During the attempt that was made to eat something, an attempt which was in great measure a failure, the landlady knocked at the door, and entering with a telegram in her hand, said that a messenger from the Grand Hotel had just brought this along.

"Frae Betty, as I'm a leevin sinner. Hes shu heard onything, I winder? Mary, open it. I canna. What says shu?"

“Come home with the boy at once.  
Elizabeth Laurenson.”

“Loard save me. I nedder hae boy or money ta go hom wi. I dunna hae money even ta pey mi ludgin. Whan wis shu haanded in ? ”

“At 2.45 ; received here at 3.10,” replied the Tittie, who had taken the telegram in her hand.

“Ony wird aboot da bairn,” inquired the landlady, anxiously.

“Non. Less-a-less, dir nae wird aboot him. Weel, dir wan thing, its oonpossible at his midder hes heard aboot dis day’s ongain, fur we harly ken wirsells. Tink ye ir dey ony pushon tould her aboot him faain ower da sea.”

“I saw—I saw,” said Mary through her sobs, “Sibbie Renelson among da crood at da pier da day he fell ower. Shu went hom dat nicht.”

“Sibbie Renelson ! Dan, my jewel, da bluid is i da bucket. Betty knows, as shure as doo’s livin. Dat shu does. Oh, dis weemen an dir tongues. Dem dey canna howld. Nae winder da Apostle said shu wis a unruly member. I’ll meet Sibbie Renelson yit, though, an shu’ll get a bit o mi mind. Weel, we canna sit here langer. We maun go an hunt ower da place till we fin oot somethin.”

Just as they got to the street, they met the high-heeler, Mr D., the clerks, and the reporters.

“Hillo,” said the chief clerk, “anything wrong ? You are all looking as serious as if you were going to your own funerals.”

“Da fac is at Joanie is disappeared.”

“Joanie disappeared !”



"Weel, he guid oot i da moarnin, an he's no come back. We're been lookin fur him fur twartree hoors, an we canna finn him. He'll turn up aa richt, I hae nae doot, though."

"I devoutly hope so. This is serious. Can we help you?"

"Dat ye can, thank you. I tink da best we can du wid be ta divide da toon into districts, as ye wid say. If ye six wid divide yersells inta tree, we tree wid divide into twa. I'll geng mesell sooth aroond da banks an wast as far as da place dey caa Gulberwick; an' Miss G. an Mr D. could try da shops an da hooses as far as da Market Cross; anidder set could try da hooses an shops nort ower, fae da Cross; anidder could geng along da Esplanade; an da idder could go ta da norrird as far as Greemister. I see nothin else fur it."

"We'll set out at once," said the high-heeler. "This is a very serious matter."

The various parties dispersed in the directions agreed upon. They hunted high and low, enquired at almost everyone they met, and succeeded in raising a large number of the inhabitants of the town in the hue and cry for Joanie. No success attended all the efforts made, however, for of course Joanie was not in Lerwick.

With the exception of Jerry, who had not turned up, the searchers met about seven o'clock at the foot of Chromate Lane. A solemn and serious-looking lot they were. Mary's eyes were red with weeping; the Tittie's cheery optimism had almost disappeared; the high-heeler had

nothing to say that could disperse the gloom hanging over all ; and the men, although they endeavoured to put the best face on things, felt very ill at ease indeed.

" We needn't stand here attracting attention," said Mr D. " We'd better go to Mr Laurenson's lodging and see whether he has come back."

Arrived at the lodging, and going upstairs, the first that met the gaze of Mary and the Tittie, who entered together, and the others, was the imp, seated on a chair with his feet on the back of another, puffing away at a cigarette and reading an old volume of " Jack Harkaway," while the missing Joanie, the object of the day's fruitless search, the cause of so much anxiety, was calmly immersed in the pages of " The Boys' Herald," as if nothing out of the way had happened. The pair had evidently just finished an excellent tea.

At the sight of her brother, Mary collapsed. The hours of mental and physical strain she had gone through had its inevitable result. She fainted, and but for the supporting arm of Mr I., would have fallen on the floor.

" Bliss my sowl an boady, what is goin on here ? " asked the well-known voice of Jerry, who had just arrived.

" The boy has come ; the prodigal has returned," said Mr D. " Let us kill the fatted calf."

" Da fatted calf ! A horse wheep, I tink, wid be mair laek it. Bit what's wrang, though ; what's wrang wi Mary ? "

" Mary will be all right in two two's. She's

upset, poor thing, after the day's search and anxiety, and no wonder. Give her some fresh air, and she'll soon come to," said the high-heeler.

"I'm heard at a basin o cowld wattir slushed i dir face is a graand thing fur takin folk oot o a swaam."

"Oh, no ; that's too crude and too cruel."

"Joanie Laurenson, in da name o Him at made dee, whaar's du been dis day ?"

"I'm been at Hillswick."

"At Hillswick ? Wha took dee ta Hillswick ?"

"I guid wi da boy yonder, i da motor."

"Yes, I took Joanie for the run. I thought we would be back about five o'clock, but the motor broke down on the way out, and although another motor passed us, he would not stop to give us a small part. needed. Wait till I meet that chaffueur. I know him. That wasted an hour and a half. Oh, here's a letter from the Chairman for you."

"Ye're a boanie pair, ye ir. Ye hed nae richt ta tak da boy, an he hed less richt ta go. Ye're geen wiz a day, Joanie at Hillswick, an his midder telegraphin fur him at da same time ! What sood be don ta da pair o you is ta gie you a soond treshin. Dat's what you sood get."

"Dunna be angry wi da bairns, fur mercy sake. Man, be tankfil at der come back safe an soond. Dir only twa bits o boys, an what can ye expec ?"

"Oh, yae, yae, dat's laek you weemen. Alwis stickin up fur da boys. Yiss, yiss."

“ I propose the fatted calf. Mary has come round ; the boys are here. Let us eat, drink, and be merry,” said Mr D., who was always on for something good.

“ Dat’s some sense,” said the landlady. “ I’se geng oot an get a bit o bacon, and twartree eggs, an ye’ll hae a fine tae. Heth, ye’ll maybe geng ta da Pictirs da nicht yet.” And without waiting to hear remonstrances, off the kindly soul went, happy in the knowledge that “ da bairn ” was safe and sound.

As the smell of the frizzling bacon was wafted upward a few minutes afterwards, Jerry, who had opened and read his letter and found everything satisfactory, and who was therefore in a better humour, remarked that “ a fattid calf wisna ta be hed, bit it seems we’re gaen ta get a bit o grice. Weel, weel,” he added, as he put the letter in his pocket, “ dey say aa’s weel at ends weel ; bit I don kno. What about da middle ? Dat’s da time o it. Folk, do you know I’m awfil pitten about at ye harly hae room ta sit doon. You’re hed a hard day o it, an I wid laek at you aa took somethin wi me i mi ain hoose, if I may say so.”

“ We’ll manage,” said the Tittie. “ Mary will get a cup of tea in a minute, and the rest of us can sit anywhere. This is an occasion for joy, not for ceremony. Come down and help the good old soul.” In a very short time she and Madam and the landlady appeared with all the “ rewhirements,” which, placed on the table, almost covered it.

“ Dey’ll be nae room fur da whole o you ta

sit doon at da table, bit I hoop you'll mak da best o it. Noo, as lang as da tae is hot, sit doon an aet, an gude may it du you."

The company, some on the bed, others on the sofa, the rest on chairs, with the plates on their knees, or anywhere that room could be found for them, spent the happiest time they had ever put in at a meal, although neither the style nor the cooking were quite up to the standard of the Savoy Hotel. The imp's rather exuberant spirits had appreciably fallen in the presence of his adored, to whom he cast furtive and frequent glances, at which the said adored was a good deal amused and by no means ill pleased; but he managed to dispose of his share of what was going—his appetite was not affected by his tender feelings.

"Weel, fattid calf or no, dat's a good bit o ham, an da tae is fine too. Dis woman hes da sense ta steer clear o dis vild marjarine, tu, an gie wis dacent butter. May we never be waar. Bairns, do ye know, I tink we'll aa geng ta da Pictirs. It'll be a relief efter dis weary, weary day. Mary, tinks du is du fit?"

Mary having signified that she thought she would make the effort, the necessary preparations were made by all present to betake themselves to that place of entertainment.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

**The P.M. says "dir far mair hansom men as lovely weemen t da world," a statement which the Tittie denies "utterly."**

THE possession of a cheque for £44, the fact that Joanie was in the house safe and sound, that Mary was almost all right, and that he and the whole party had had an excellent tea, put the P. M. in an excellent humour. He was more like himself than he had been since he came to "dis aafil toon."

"Feth, do you kno," he whispered to Mr D., who was sitting near him, "dir juist wan thing needed ta roond aff dis tae, as ye wid say, an dat's a stiff gless o rale gude stuff. Dat wid mak da thing complete. Bit I suppose it's no ta be hed, sae muckle as da peety. I mann see da doctor da moarn, aboot yon certeefficat, fur I'm no gaen hom ithoot a bottle wi me if I can mak it oot at aal. I cant afford ta do it, baid fur Betty an meself. Ye see, whin folk gets on in years dey need somethin. Da hert is hed a lock o hard wark fur mony a lang year, an shu's gettin kind o played oot, an needs a bit o kuikerin. Hit's a boany story, in feth, at a daecent person has ta get a line afore ye can get a drap o whisky. I'm seen da day whin ye could bring Faera braandy hom bi da gallon at a shillin a bottle, an ye could

buy barrels o her at hom at twa-an-six. Aah—  
aah—aye, aye ; dat wis da days, dat wis da days.  
Da Greenland fishin and da Faera fishin, an da  
young hert, da young hert, ye kno. I toucht  
about nothin, an cared about nothin. Man, I  
wis laek a selkie. Nothin hurtit me. I could  
staand cowld, or haet, or onything, an wis as  
strong as a ox. Dan we wid come hom an du  
a bit o coortin wi da lasses, spend wir money,  
tak a dram noo an dan, an aff we went agen.  
Bit, heth, do ye kno, wance I got in tow wi Betty,  
I hed ta clew in a bit. Betty pat doon her fit,  
sae ta spaek. ‘Jerry,’ shu said, ‘if du’s gaein  
ta hae onything ta do wi me, du’ll hae ta pit a  
stop ta dis onkerry.’ ‘Onkerry?’ I said,  
‘onkerry, what—what onkerry?’ ‘Oh, du kens  
weel anof what I mean. I’m no gaen ta hae da  
man at I mairy wastin da coarn o money at he  
aerns—an heth it’s no muckle at da best—laek a  
dereeshin. So, edder settle doon ta sense, or  
dan—’ Weel, ye kno, I kent at Betty wis very  
found o me dan, an I wis very found o her ;  
an I kent afore shu broucht hersell ta say yon,  
shu wis been tinkin a lock. So, ye see, I wis  
young, an fu o foaly, an wis haed a bit o fun laek  
ony idder young chap wi ony speerit in him. An  
in a wye I settled ta what Betty caad sense. At  
ony rate, she took me. An shu’s here an I’m here  
too. Mony a bastle we’re hed wi dis weary world  
sin dan. Aye, aye. Bit many is da time at  
Betty is towld me fae we mairried at I wis a fule  
in mony a wye ; an ta tell ye da truth, shu’s no  
sae far wrang. Fur wan thing, I’m been wan



fule fae I cam ta Lerrick, an whin I get hom, shu'll not be free o lattin me know it. Weel, weel, da man at's no a fule some time o his life is no man at aal ; dat's the conclusion I'm com till, efter sixty years o basilation an bruckilation in dis wilderness. Bit dis is not da point. Da point is da Pictirs. Haes du got dee bits o things on yet, Mary ? ”

“ Yae, I'm nearly ready.”

“ Oh, dis weemen an dir hats, an dir preens, an dir hair, an dir broches, an dir glives, an aa da rest o dir fixins. Shu's a dim afore ye get sail up an da boat underwye.”

“ Well, we are something to look at, when we are ready, not a set of frumps, like men,” said the Tittie, who was “ fixin her broo hair ” at the glass.

“ Heth, locks o you need somethin ta set you aff. We don't.”

“ Pooff ! You men can hardly walk, some of you, for conceit of yourselves. You go strutting about as if the whole world belonged to you. Poor, weak creatures that you are. Why, a girl of sixteen can twist the best man that ever trod the earth round her fingers if she wishes. She has but to lift her eyes and he falls down and worships her. And still you're packed full of pride and conceit.”

“ Dir a very good reason fur dat, my jewel. Did ye never notice at da Loard hes made man, an aa da male animals o creation da best lookin ? ”

“ Pon my word ! Did you ever here the like of that,” said the Tittie, while the high-heeler

gave a very audible sniff ; Mary merely smiled ; and the others seemed highly amused.

“ It’s a fac I’m tellin you. Tak man ta begin wi. Did you ever see onything more splendid as a rael handsome man ? ”

“ Nothing, except a lovely woman.”

“ So far right, my dear ; bit not aatageder. A lovely woman can never give da same graand impression as a handsome man. Dat’s oonpossible. Forby dat, dir far mair handsome men as lovely weemen.”

“ I deny that utterly.”

“ Ye can deny it or no as ye laek ; da fac is dere. Dan look at da bruit creation. A bull is a far better lookin animal as a coo.”

“ Great, ugly, heavy-looking brutes. I hate them.”

“ An a stallion as a mare.”

“ Wild, evil-looking things.”

“ An a ram as a sheep.”

“ Horrible, wicked creatures, with great ugly horns.”

“ Or a cock as a hen.”

“ Yes, oh yes ; strutting about crowing and kicking up a row and doing nothing, just like the men.”

“ Or a drake as a duke ? ”

“ Cackling, useless, conceited things.”

“ Or a peacock an a pea-hen.”

“ Now we come to it. Now we’re near it. A pea-cock is just a man over again. So primed, packed, filled up with pride and conceit that he can barely walk along the ground, spreading out

his feathers, thinking that everyone is admiring him while they are only laughing at him. And all the time the useful hen is doing the work."

"Bit look, my jewel, hoo boanie he is. Compared wi him, da hen is a poor lookin objec, an aa at shu looks fur fae him is a glint o his e'e. Dat's juist da wye o da weemen, ye kno. Lat a man gie a woman a smile, an shu's i da seeventh heeven. Na, na, my dear, da Loard made man an aa males da nobler an best lookin animal, an if ye wid bit juist open your eyes an look ye wid fin at Jerry is white richt, yiss, even ta da birds an da fishes."

"For goodness sake, let us go if we are going, instead of standing here talking undiluted rubbish," said the Tittie. "You can follow. That's your proper place, to follow after the sex that has some sense of taste and a feeling for beauty, and be glad if any of them throw you a glance. Come along, Mary." And the three went off, as the P. M. said, in a "tirry-mirry," and the "nobler" animals followed at a respectful distance.

"Yon's juist da wye o da weemen," said the P. M. to Mr D. "Dey never argee, ye kno. Dey edder rin awev, or shange da subjec. So, puir objects at dey ir. I suppose da Loard made dem too."

"Da weemen" arrived at the Picture House first, and were standing waiting for the lords of creation.

"Here we are," said the Tittie, who was not in the very best of tempers, "standing waiting for

you, instead of you being here to give us proper attention."

"Ye guid aff in sic a aet at naebody could mak up wi you. I'm nearly braethless. Bit we're aa here at last. What's da price o da man's chairge?"

"I know nothing about it. You asked us to the Picture House, and it's for you to attend to all these matters."

"Heth, do you kno, da Tittie is in a bit o a temper," said Jerry to one of the clerks. "Da weemen don't laek to be towld da truth. No, no. Noo, I hed juist been sayin at Betty mony a time said I wis a fule. If shu wis here, she wid baid tink it an say it, fur I'm aksed aa dis folk ta da Pictirs, an I'm blissed if I hev more as tenpence hapny in mi pocket. Hae ye a pound not ipu you? I reckon it'll tak ten shillins ta lat wis in, an dan da lasses laeks a bit o chocolat in dir mooths, amiss tings. I'll hae plenty o money da moarn, an ye sall hae da money back as shune as I get it fae da bank."

The money was forthcoming, and the party were soon seated in the best seats upstairs, where under the influence of some good pictures, a few chocolates of rare and refreshing quality, the attentions of Mr H., and the ill-concealed and adoring glances of the imp, who was in that stage of calf love which clothes its object with a glorified halo, the Tittie soon regained her wonted good humour. The imp was so entranced at being in the same seat as his beloved that he forgot to smoke his usual cigarettes. The others, however, made up

for his omission, and the P. M. had a very comfortable rook, besides "crumpin" a number of big lozenges which he had purchased, in which performance Joanie rendered yeoman assistance.

"Noo, bairns, we'll go hom. We're hed a day o it, wan wye an anidder; bit we're aa weel, an dats something ta be thankfil fur. Of course," he remarked to the Tittie, "whin I said yon aboot men and weemen, I kent weel anof at ye wir better-looking yersell as da man at's got you in his ee. Bit he's no bad, he's no bad. Noo, don't ye twa go an walk aboot till aa hoors. Geng hom an go ta bed, an hae a guid sleep, fur we hae ta geng hom da moarn, an I want ta see you lookin your best, fresh an boanie."

After breakfast next morning, the P. M., taking the cheque he had received from the Chairman, made his way over to the bank. "Dey'll shurly be nae trouble wi dis cheque. Man, dis banks. Da wye o dis banks. Der as perteeclar aboot gein oot twartree pound as if dev wir gein dir bits o sowls."

"Dat's a boanie day da day."

"Very nice day."

"So, ye widna gie me mi money last time I wis alang. I hoop ye'll be satisfeed dis time. What tink ye o dat," handing the accountant the cheque.

The accountant, the P. M. noticed, examined the cheque very carefully, turned it round, looked at the back, and scanned it closely again.

"The cheque is all right so far as it goes, but it's not complete."

"Not complete? What deil next? Isna da chairman's name ipun it?"

"It is, but it has to have two other signatures. It should be countersigned."

"Coontersigned?"

"I mean that besides the chairman, another Commissioner—not yourself—and the head Clerk have to sign it."

"Loard be aboot me! Fur what a wark. What's da need o dat? What is da need fur dat?"

"These are our instructions, and we have to attend to them. One signature on a cheque is never taken in the case of public bodies."

"Why fur?"

"Because it's public money they are dealing with, and people have to be careful."

"Do ye mean ta say at men at's on public boadies, laek mesell, is a set a rogues?"

"We don't say anything. We never do. We act. One man, you see, has to be a check upon the other."

"Feth, in dis place its nothin bit check, check, check, an as far as I can mak oot da cheques ye gie oot fur folk ta sign ye winna pey."

"Oh, yes, we'll pay the money all right if everything is in order. All you have to do is to get another Commissioner and the Clerk to sign this cheque, and we will give you forty-four pounds, less the overdraft. By the way, we close at twelve to-day."

"Ye ir a baand, ony wye dey laek ta tak you. Ye nedder gie money nor time."

"Time is money, you know."

"Dan, feth, ye most hae plenty o it, shuttin at twal o'clock. I most get dis money dis day, or dan I know not what'll happen."

Once more the P. M. plodded south over as far as "da Wheens," soliloquising about "da wyes o dis banks." "Coontersigned," he said. "I'm heard o coontersunk screws, bit coontersigned ! Heth, dir most be some connection wi screws aboot it somewye, fur it's a deevil of a screw ta get onything oot o dem. Coontersigned. Weel, coontersigned or coontersunk, I'll hae ta finn da men ta pit da thing richt, an waste nae time ower it edder."

Again the P. M. met with disappointment. The two gentlemen, the girl said, had just gone out for a walk in the direction of the Docks.

"What's goin ta come ower me dis day ? If I dunna get dis money I canna pey mi ludgin or get Joanie his strood, or mi ain twa suits, an a dizzen peerie things forby. I juist hae wan hoor, I see. If I miss dem, I'm don fur, an dey'll be a steuch at hom if I dunna turn up dis nicht wi da boy."

These disquieting thoughts put mettle in Jerry's heels, and he "stoored" north over the Esplanade, as he would have described it, at the rate of knots. Eagerly he scanned every male face he met, hoping to fall in with Mr D. and the clerk. All in vain. He went as far as Skibbadock, without result.

"I'll try da Hillhead," he said. "Dir maybe geen up dat wye."



Along King Harald Street, then back along Albany Street, then south over Commercial Road, the P. M., who was now getting pretty warm, went. Time was passing. "It's halfpast eleeven o'clock. Bairns, dis is aafil. I'se try da shore again." Still no success. "Dir juist wan place more. I'll try da Graand. Dir maybe dere playin billards." Sure enough they were there, along with the imp.

"Going to pot the red before you go home ?" he inquired.

"Boy, howld dee paece. You're juist da twa I'm been lookin fur aa moarnin, (addressing Mr D. and the clerk). Dir a peerie thing I was wantin ye ta obleege me wi, if ye wid juist step into dis idder room, whaar dir's ink an pen." A few minutes sufficed for the two to adhibit their signatures, during which time the P. M. wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"Thank you, thank you. Ye can tell da boy if I hae a meenit ta spare, I'll pit yon red baa i da hol yit, afore I go hom."

At seven minutes to 12, Jerry arrived at the bank, hot but satisfied. "I'm in," he said to himself, "an no aa da banks in Breetan 'ill pit me oot afore I get mi money. Mi nown money too. Juist twa weeks' wages."

The bank was filled with people, but this gave the P. M. no concern. He would wait his turn. Besides, he saw that the accountant recognised him, and no doubt remembered their recent conversation. Twelve o'clock had struck, the last customer had gone, and the door was closed, ere

the accountant was free to attend to him.

"You're a bit late," he remarked.

"Late ! I'm hed me a day huntin fur yon twa men. Hit's a mercy I'm here ava. I'm poorin doon wi sweat. Ye'll maybe no be giein me da money, noo its chappid twal o'clock ?"

"We'll not be so hard as all that. We do have some bowels of compassion."

"Dir no big anof ta hurt you, I tink."

"This is all right now. Will you have single notes, or fives, or perhaps two tens ?"

"Na, ye can gie dem aa wan pound. Der haandier, an ye see better what we're duin."

"Twenty-eight, thirteen, three. You'd better see if that's right."

"I toucht it wis forty-fower."

"Yes, but the little bit of overdraft, you know."

"Oh, yiss, yiss. A-hem. Juist so. Ju-ist so. Richt ? I ken it'll no be ower muckle, an I want ta mak sure it's no ower little."

After Jerry had slowly done some figuring, and as slowly counted the notes and the silver, he said, "Yiss, its richt anof, bit twenty-eight is a gude bit fae forty-four. Ye'll be plaesed noo, I hoop, at you're gotten yon twartree pounds. Ye'll be mairried, I hae nae doot."

"I haven't risen to that noble estate yet."

"Aboot nobble, I kno not ; an as fur edder state or estate, shu's kind o mixedy-maxedy, as da wife said. Bit I wis juist gaen ta say dis, if da wives o dis bank folk hes as muckle wark gettin twartree shillins oot o dir men fur da bairns as

I'm hed gettin dis twartree pound oot o here, da Loard peety dem. Dat's aa at I hae ta say. So I hoop ye'll get a guid wife yet."

"I hope so."

"Bit, of coorse, as da man said, dir aa fine lasses, bit whaar comes aa da bad wives fae ? "

"Likely from the same place that all the bad men come from."

"Maybe. You're young, my billy, you're young. So, I'se be goin. Gude day ta you."

"Faider, I'm been lookin fur you aa mornin," said Mary, as the P. M. stepped out of the bank.

"What fur ? "

"Hae you telegraphed ta midder aboot comin hom wi Joanie da nicht ? "

"Lass, I'm hed sic a moarning at I never kent I hed a wife or a bairn belangin me. Bit, bit we'll hae ta—we'll hae ta geng ta da Post Office streecht e'en noo an tell her."

"An have you seen aboot your suits ? " asked the Tittie.

"My jewel at ye ir, I'm no hed wan meenit at I could caa me ain."

"And Joanie's strood ? "

"Losh bliss my boady—"

"And the gloves you've to get—"

"Raelly—"

"And the photograph you've to take ? "

"Merciful fadder ! Wha said I wis gaen ta tak me potograph ? "

"I did. Come and send off the wire, and then we'll see if we can find a decent suit of clothes to get your photograph taken in."

"Ye'll maybe be wantin yours tu ? "

" Maybe we all want. I wouldn't say."

" What neist ? " sighed the P. M., as the party went to the Post Office.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

The P. M. has a terrible struggle in putting on a new collar ; and refuses "edder for man, woman, or shild," to take off his whisker.

"Come along, now," said the Tittie, after Betty had been informed that the party were leaving for home in the afternoon, "and see if there is in the town anything in the way of ready-made clothes fit for one of the Government, as you call yourself, to put on. Men are such children, infants, in regard to their clothes, that they need the guiding hand of a woman, who as a matter of course has taste, to look after them. If you were left to yourself you would take anything they offered you—anything, whether it was too big or too small, ill-fitting, or hideous in colour, so long as it could go on you. Oh, you poor, helpless things that you are ! What would you do without the women ? But Mary and I will look after you."

"Weel, I'm sure," said the P. M., who, as he said to himself, was "afore da wind," and submitted to the Tittie's taking charge of him with a good grace, "as lang as you're plaesed, its aa da sam ta Jeremiah. I never gae muckle toucht ta mi claes i my life. I never haed da money ta get mair as covered me at wan time ; an as fur

tinkin aboot da shape or da colour or da fit o da bit o strood I got every third or fort year, it never cam i mi head. I'm no a woman. I didna need ta tink aboot penkin mesell up. Men don't re-whire ta dress da same wye as a woman. Dress only taks fae dir appearance."

"That's simply your conceit. You do need to dress, especially now, when you are coming among people who have been accustomed to clothe themselves in becoming attire all their lives. It's not a matter altogether of money. A person can dress with taste and care even supposing he does not have a great deal of money, and you've got to learn how to do it, now that money is not such a consideration with you. Here's a shop which anyone can see is devoted to men's attire. There's not the brilliancy, and beauty, and variety and tempting display that you see in shops where our clothes are offered for sale."

"You're richt dere. Men's claes is fur use ; no fur ornament, laek da most o yours. Weel, we'll geng an aks what dey hae."

"Oh yes," the shopkeeper said, "we have a lot of excellent ready-made suits. What size do you take ?"

"Size ? I know nothin aboot sizes. Da man at made my claes hom juist hed mi fit, an whin I got a new strood fae him I juist pat him on, an dey wir nae mair aboot it."

"That sort of thing will not do now. That looks a fairly decent looking jacket, now. Try it on."

"Its ower peerie," said Mary.

"Its ower ticht i da oxtter, sure anof," said her parent.

"Now I see it on, its a second-rate looking thing," said the Tittie. "Have you nothing better?"

"Sorry, ma'am, but these are the best we have. These are excellent suits for the money. Try this one."

"Far too big," said the Tittie. "Makes you look like a bag-man setting off on a journey. Take it off, for goodness' sake. The others are all quite unsuitable, if this is the lot."

"This is all we have just now. We can order a suit to be made to measure and have it here in a fortnight."

"A fortnight! Na, na, my freend. I most hae her dis very day, or dan dis weemen 'ill tak mi head aff. Ir dey ony idder shops whaar dey keep dis ready-made claes?"

"I suppose there are."

"So, we'll geng an hae a look. Guid day."

"I told you that," said the Tittie. "You'll look as if you had come out of an old-clo shop no matter what you get in these ready-mades. I can tell them a mile off. And to think that you are to go about in third-rate, second-hand, slop-made, ill-fitting clothes, while the rest of the Commission are dressed as they should be! I'll never be pleased until you get proper tailor-made clothes, and appear as well put-on as the rest of them."

"My jewel at you ir, you're losin your boanie peerie head aatagedder. I'm no laek da rest o dem, an I dont want ta look laek dem, edder wan



wye or da idder. I'm da man at does da wark ; an men at du wark doesna geng aboot dressed in fine claes."

"That's all right enough to a certain extent. When you go and cast peats, or do anything in the nature of dirty work, you can put on anything you like. It's when we are sitting as a Commission, or going through the districts in connection with the work, or in coming to Lerwick on necessary business, meeting people who naturally look up to us as being something, that I want you to have clothes fit to put on. Now, here's another shop. Let's give it a trial." Four more shops were tried with the same result. The Tittie and Mary found fault with every suit laid out. Each was either too large or too small, too "old-clo" looking, too wrinkled, or not up to requirements in quality ; there was something wrong with every one. So that all they had accomplished during the morning was to give a considerable amount of trouble to five different shopmen. However, at last a suit was found which in most respects came up to the Tittie's high standard ; but only one. "Of course, you couldn't get all you wanted. No, no. That would be impossible," she said. "This suit, now, will hardly be fit to be seen in a month if it is worn continuously. So it simply means that instead of getting one suit from the tailor, you will have to get two."

"I'll du nothin o da kind. Wan I'll get, as I meent, bit twa I'll not ; an since ye can fin naethin at can fit ready-made accept da wan, dan

wan 'ill juist hae ta du. Twa is plenty."

"All right, since you wish it so," said the Tittie, who just put off to a more convenient season the getting of the other suit. "What do you say, now, to going and getting your photo taken?"

"Juist as I staand, dan."

"Certainly not. It will not take a minute to carry the suit home and get into it. We will meet you here. We have one or two things to buy which—"

"Ye dunna want me ta see?"

"Go home, and put on a new collar and a new tie; and that, with your new suit, will make you more like what you should be."

After paying £2 17/6 for the clothes, and getting the parcel, the P. M. wended his way home, to change into his new toggery, ruminating on the weakness of man in general and the "wyes o da Tittie" in particular. "Dis weemen is waar as da banks, an dat's saying a lock," he muttered. Three quarters of an hour elapsed ere the P. M. returned.

"What on earth has come over that man," asking the Tittie of Mary, both of whom were getting impatient.

The explanation was simple. Jerry had got into his new suit with ease, and, it must be confessed, surveyed himself in the small glass that hung near the mantle shelf with a feeling of considerable pride and satisfaction. It was the collar that gave the trouble. The Tittie had insisted on his getting what he called "dis venamis, ill-con-

trived, twa-fald kind, at no human bein can get pitten on." The collar was new, and pretty hard ; it was if anything too small ; the stud was a swivel one, and very loose ; and although he took his kalavine and opened up the holes so as to make the process of putting on easier, for the life of him he could not get " da deevil's thing " fixed. The long tie either fell out when he thought he had nearly accomplished the task ; or if it held, embedded between his neck and the collar, just as he thought he was on the point of victory, the stud slipped out of his fingers. After fifteen minutes of pulling, and twisting, and " girnin " and setting his teeth, he sat down on the chair as far ahead as he was when he began, with the difference that the collar was a good deal crushed and by no means unsoiled.

" Dis is harder wark as a vaige ta da haaf," he remarked, as he wiped the perspiration from his brow. " Ta tink at ony daecent human bein sood be sic a fule as laabir an set on an waste time wi wupin a bit o cloot roond his neck ! Me ! da faider o a faimly, a man at's been aa ower da world, fae Davis Straets ta Wheebec, an knows what da world is, ta come ta dis ! Ta be bet wi a bit o a collar ! Ta be laandid on da keel o mi back wi a peerie bit o cloot ! Da thing is not ta be thought o. I'll hae anidder try."

The other try was as unsuccessful as those that had been made before ; and so were the fresh efforts made with another collar.

" Bairns, dis is raelly past spaekin aboot. What am I ta du ? If I geng ithoot a collar da

Tittie 'ill be jimpin, an Mary 'ill no be muckle better. I winder if dis woman kens onything about dis kind o collars ? ”

Putting his head outside the door, the P. M. called downstairs and asked the landlady if she could look up “ for a meenit.”

“ What’s wrang wi you noo ? ”

“ Dir no sae much wrang wi me as wi dis deevil’s collar. I canna get him on.”

“ Canna get on a collar, man ? Dat’s shurly a easy job. Lat’s see if I can help.” And the landlady, who had just been engaged peeling potatoes for the dinner, gave her hands a dight in her apron and came to the rescue.

“ It’s dis new-fangled pushons at ye hae, is it ? I ken no about dis kind. I wis wint ta help mi boy wi da idder kind, bit dis—Lat’s see. Hould up dis great whisker o yours, man. I canna see what I’m duin.”

Jerry held up his whisker, or his beard rather, with both hands, while the landlady made an examination of the collar and its peculiarities. “ I see,” she said. “ Da peerie side gengs in first. Weel, dat’s on. Da collar is ower peerie. Nae winder ye couldna get him on. Now, hould fornenst me fill I get dis venom on da stud tu. No. Aff agen. Howld your breath an mak your trot peerier till I pu. Ah, der shu is. Loard be aboot me, fur sic a wark wi dis men. I wid redder wirk wi a infant.”

“ Weel, shu’s on, bit I can harly braethe. Ticht ; yiss, shu’s ticht. What about da tie ? ”

“ I ken nothin about da wye dey fasten yon

ties at aall. Pit him on onyweye. Dey'll no see it fur da whisker."

In desperation, for he knew the girls would be wondering what was wrong, Jerry "wupid," as he termed it, the tie anyway, and buttoning his vest, putting on a new hat, and grasping his stick—which was old and time-worn—he bowled north over the street, feeling a bit smarter if a little more uncomfortable with the tightness of the collar and the newness of the suit.

"What in the name of goodness has kept you?"

"Folk, yon vild pushon o a collar is nearly been mi death. I toucht I wid never—"

"What genius put on your tie? Whatever have you been doing? A tie is meant to be put on, not left anyhow. And what an old, horrible stick."

"Bairns, laeve me alon. Da tie is weel anof. What tink ye o me new suit?"

"The suit is passable. A blind horse a mile off wouldn't notice that it was ready-made, and that the sleeves of the jacket are an inch too long; but a person of sense would notice these things in a twinkling. The tie will never do."

"Da whisker covers her."

"But she's wrong all the same, and must be put right. Besides, I was going to make a proposal to you before going to the photographer's."

"An what micht dat be?"

"I was going to propose that you take off that hideous old beard of yours."

"Shave me whisker? Me? Me? Jirry

Laurenson tak away his whisker ? Woman—”

“ Why not ? Your suit has made you look ten years younger already, and if you would shave clean, like most of the others, that would make you look like a young man of forty, and show up your fine features to advantage, besides.”

“ No. Dat’s wan thing I’ll never do, not fur man, woman, or shild. Whin Paal said at woman’s glory wis her haid, he forgot ta say at man’s glory wis his whisker. No, no. He’s juist as da Loard made him. Dir never been raazor ipu Jirry’s face yet, an never will. Ye’ll maybe be wantin ta tak awa mi strent, da sam wye as dat trooker took awa Samson’s whin shu cut off his hair ? ”

“ The very reverse. I want you to look younger and smarter.”

“ I’m juist plain Jirry Laurenson, an plain Jirry Laurenson I’ll remain ta da end o da shapter, whisker an aa, juist as he’s been fur ower theerty year, accept at he’s a biť whiter noo as he wis dan. Na na ; I’m no gaen ta shange noo. Forby, what wid Betty, say if I cam hom ithoot mi whisker, an me a elder o da kirk ? I micht maist as weel com hom ithoot da boy. I mind i my young days, whin I wis sailin sooth, an dis fashion o shavin cam in, an da young chaps cam hom ithoot a hair ipu dir faces, at Betty wid say ta me every time I guid sooth, “ Noo, Jirry, dir juist wan thing du’s not ta du amung aa dy onkerry an foaly—du’s not ta touch dee whisker ; dy whisker bides on, mind dat. I hae some respec fur da warks o da Loard. A whisker is what He meent man ta hae, an He



widna a pitten it dere ta be cuttid aff.' Betty hes sense, ye kno, in mony wyes ; an shu alwiss hed a respec fur da warks o da Loard. So aa at I'm done wi him fae dat day ta dis is ta comb him wance a week, generly on Sunday moarnin afore we guid ta da kirk. Ye needna mention sic a thing. I micht as weel aks you ta cut aff your hair."

"Well, since you are so determined about it, we will say no more. But the tie will have to be put right."

"Da potographer 'ill hae ta du it himsell, dan, fur I canna."

"Come along, and waste no more time."

So, farther north the party went, and up an unpaved street to the photographer's.

"I'm broucht dis twa lasses alang ta get dir potographs taen," the P. M. said to the young man in the studio. "Dis weemen is alwiss fur gettin dir pictirs taen, ye kno."

"Don't believe him. It's really he who has come to get his photograph taken, but he doesn't like to say so."

"I see. Men are generally very modest creatures."

"They are. They are. Extremely so," said the Tittie.

"Weel, I tink ye twa 'ill better geng in troo an get ready—dat'll be wan dim—an I'll come in efter an see what laek ye look."

When the girls had got safely out of sight, the P. M. whispered to the young man—

"Du ye ken da wye ta pit on dis new lang ties ?"



“ I have a sort of a notion.”

“ Gude bliss you, as ye micht see if ye could pit dis thing richt at I’m gotten wupid aboot me neck. I’m hed me a day. Da collar I did get on, efter a awfil struggle ; bit da tie bet me. I’m no carin a preen aboot da tie mesell ; its dis weemen. Man, dir gettin sae parteeclar noo-a-days at dir no livin wi dem at aall. Fur mi ain pairt, I laek nothing better as a graavit ; its far mair comfortable as dis ticht collars. Da graavit is collar an tie tagedder. Bit whin ye get amung dis jantry ! I’m wan o da Paet Commission, ye ken.”

“ Oh, yes. Of course when you get among people who always wear collars, you must do the same. I think it will not take much time to fix the tie. Come in this way.”

“ Thank you, thank you. I hoop da lasses ’ill be plaesed noo. I see da wye its don noo. Da Paet Commission ? Oh, we’re gettin on fine. I cant say we’re hed ower muckle wark yit, bit we’re hed some. Man, dis paets is a big subjec, I assure you. Afore wan knows aa aboot paets it taks years.”

“ Then you expect to be on this business for a considerable time ? ”

“ Tree years, dey said, whin dey startid. Bit tree years ’ill not do it at da rate we’re goin at. Dir nae hurry, of coorse. Its Governmint wark, ye kno. I winder if da bits o lasses is got dir hair richt yit. I’ll go an see.”

“ Aye, aye ; oh yiss, ye’re at it. Nae faer o you. Noo, Mary, dat’ll not do. Howld up dee

head a bit higher, an try an look mair as du wis whin du wis a peerie ting. I tink, do ye kno, at dis lasses never looks sae boanie as whin dey wir bairns," the P. M. remarked to the photographer, a very genial-looking person.

"I don't know about that. They always look boanie."

"Some o dem, bit not aal. Dir no sae muckle o da world in dem whin dir young, dat's it, I tink. Dat's better, Mary ; juist a peerie bit higher yit. Noo, my jewel at ye ir, your left broo curl is no juist sae curly as I'm seen her. Gie her a peerie bit o a touch. Dat's better. Noo, dat's fine, baid taggedder. Aff shu goes. Ye're no lang aboot it, I most say. Noo, dan, anidder een o you bi yoursells sittin, an dan wan staandin. I most hae you richt, edder wan wye or da idder. Noo, dan, what's da next shapter ? Wis tree taggedder ? Me sittin i da middle, an you baid wi your haand ipu me shooders ? Or me staandin wi every haand ipu your shooders ?"

"Nothing of the kind. I know exactly how we should sit, but certainly not that way," the Tittie said. The trio were grouped as she wished, and after some suggestions from the photographer, were taken in three different positions.

"Now then, for yourself. With you hat on, with it off, standing, and sitting in two different positions. I must get a photograph of you that I like in every detail."

After all this had been successfully accomplished, and the girls had put on their hats, the Tittie said, as they were leaving,

“ For goodness sake, take us to the Grand or somewhere and give us a cup of tea. I’m quite tired, and just dying for a cup of good tea.”

“ Dat ye sall, my jewel. Come ye wis. Ye sall hae dat wi my blissin.” As the party proceeded to the hotel, the P. M. said to himself, “ Noo, I winder, whin da lasses is drinkin dir tae, if dey’ll be a meenit ta try an pit yon red baa i da hol ? Da boy is laekly dere an dere aboot. We’ll see, an we’ll hae a try.”

“ So, here we ir,” he said, as the hotel was reached.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

**The P. M.** "shaks da dust o Lerrick aff o his feet," and with the others leaves for Hillswick.

AFTER ordering tea for three, and while it was getting ready, the girls meantime having gone to a room to "make themselves presentable," the P. M. sought out the billiard room, where, sure enough, the imp was engaged in a game with Mr D.

"Boy, is du here again? Du's shurly never oot o dis place."

"And what about you? What of the P. M.?"

"Me? I'm juist come ta da place ta gie da lasses a cup o tae afore we geng hom. We aa mak fur hom da nicht. Da moarn is Sunday, an ye'll aa hae ta be at da kirk, ta lat da folk see yere no a set a haethens. Every wan 'ill need ta be dere. Da folk 'ill look fur wis aa."

"That's all right," said Mr D. "To the Kirk we shall go. A Scotsman, you know, is a man who keeps the Sabbath and everything else he can lay his hands on," he added, with a laugh.

"Feth, dat is true, perteeclarly aboot everything he can lay his haands ipon. Da most o da Scotch at ever cam ta Shetland kent da wye ta du dat extree weel, sae far as ever I could mak

oot. An as fur da ministers, of coorse da most o wir jantry is juist come o Scotch ministers. Dear mael an greedy ministers, dat's what we're gotten fae Scotland."

"That shows your simplicity. Why did you allow it?"

"Hoo could we help it? Da ministers hed da speeritil pooer, an whin dey fan dat wisna anoff, dey wirmed till dey got a howld o da temperal pooer, tu, as dey ca it. Dey got howld o da laand, an dat gae dem mair howld, an so da job wis don. I hae nae great notion o dis Scotch folk, at aal, alto ye're wan o dem yersell."

"My dear sir, the Scot is the finest man going. He is in the forefront everywhere, all the world over. Everywhere you go, you find a Scot at the top."

"Dat's juist on accoont o his grippy wyies. Da Scot most be a cross atween a Jew an a ston, I tink."

"He has brains, and he works."

"An looks efter himsell, first an foremost. His brains is da hard kind, dat's sure. Look what wir shairman wantid till himsell. Half as muckle again as he was gaen ta gie ta you an me. Heth, hedna hit been fur me, ye widna a been sae weel aff, I can tell you."

"I acknowledge that you did well in regard to that matter. You stuck out like a Trojan for your rights. If every Shetlander had the spunk you have, they could have kept more to themselves. The Scotch are quite right to look after themselves. If they don't nobody else will."

"Der don dat weel aa dir life."

"Are you going to pot the red before you go home? That's the point," said the boy. "We're not going to waste precious time arguing about Scots and Shetlanders."

"Weel, boy, I wid certainly laek to hae dat setisfaction afore I shak da dust o dis toon aff o mi feet. Whaars a cue?"

"Shall we have a threesome?" asked Mr D.

"Na, I wid nedder hae treesome or fower-some. We dunna hae muckle time. We could juist try twartree shots."

"All right. Lead on, Macduff."

"Fur laedin on I don kno. My playin is mair laek laedin aff. Du'll better begin desell, an dan I'll hae a trial."

"So be it." After a few strokes the boy piled up eighteen, but missed a difficult shot. However, the balls were left in an excellent position for the P. M. to sink the red.

"There's your chance. There's your opportunity. Take a little care, and you can't miss, 'There is a tide in the affairs—'"

The Shakesperian quotation was interrupted and broken off by the entrance of the Tittie and Mary, who, unseen by the P. M. but noticed by the imp, at this moment opened the billiard room door. The Tittie was not in the best of tempers. Without deigning to notice the other two, she addressed herself to Mr Laurensen.

"How long are we to be kept waiting for our tea? We've been in the dining-room five minutes at least, and the tea and toast are getting quite cold."

"Ill trift tak dis weemen," groaned the P. M., as after making a desperate lunge his ball struck the red on the side instead of in the face, as he meant. "I'm lost mi shot."

"Woman, du ye kno at you're spoilt a heevenly shot."

"I don't care a fig about your shots. Come and take your tea."

"Fur da sake o Hir at made you, go an tak your tae, an laeve me alon. I'm no wantin tae ; I want ta pit dis red baa i da hol afore I geng hom."

"You must have your tea. You want it as well as we. Standing wasting precious time playing billiards when it is nearly two o'clock and we have to leave at five, and the boy's suit not even looked for yet."

"Loard's mercy ! Dat is true. Da boy's strood. I needna geng hom ithoot her. Bit wait you wan minute. Noo, see you, my jewel, ye laekly hae a guid awmis. Lat me try juist dis wance, wi you lookin on, an I'll maybe get her in."

"Well, just one minute ; no more. I have some respect for my tea, remember."

Just as the P. M. was in the act of striking the ball, Mary spoke to the Tittie in a rather loud whisper.

"Dis weemin 'ill never howld dir tongues. No, no. Doo's spoilt me dis time, Mary. Oh, fur dis weemin. Evil cam wi dem, an evil is been wi dem ever fae da Loard made dem. Why He did it, He alon knows."



"Come away, for goodness' sake. The fact is, you can play billiards no more than an infant; and like the men when they cannot do a thing, they blame the women for their stupidity and incapacity. Come along."

"So, boy, we'll maybe be in Lerrick again, an hae anidder try at her."

"Oh, yes; we'll live to fight another day. Ta, ta. Five o'clock at the Grand here, you say."

While discussing the tea, the girls brought home to the P. M. very clearly and forcibly the fact that he was walking in devious paths. He was neglecting to look properly after his Benjamin; he was spending money on frivolous amusements like billiards; and wasting time which could be put to better advantage.

"Dat's aa richt, anoff, sae far. I hear you; bit laek da weemen, ye aye keep ta your ain side o da fire. I'm heard nothin about da money at you're made me spend ipun dress. No, no. We hear nothin about dat. Bit if a body haes a bit o amusement, dan, dan, oh, yiss, everything is wrang. Hae ye got aa your fixins fae da dress-makers yit?"

"Everything except the gowns, which are to be sent up by the mail-gig next Tuesday."

"Juist so. We'll see dem whin dey come. I'm seen da day. Dey'll be a steuch yit, or my name is no Jirry. Weel, we'll better go an hae a look for Joanie's strood. Bit heth, we'll hae ta find da boy first. Mary, whaar is he?"

"I left him ipu da pier."

"Ipu da pier him lon, lass?"

"Yiss, bî I towld him ta be hom at wan o'clock."

"Weel, I suppose hom we'll better go, dan, as fast as wir feet can kerry wis."

As the Tittie looked at the nice wristlet watch she was wearing, she remarked, in her own taking manner,

"There's just one other little thing you'll have to do before leaving the town."

"What's dat noo?"

"Mary has a great and a proper and a natural desire to possess a wristlet watch something like this. She has no young man, poor thing, to present her with one."

"Feth, dan, da best shu can du is ta get een as whick as shu can. You'll hae me ruined afore I laeve dis place, among you. What wid be da price o yon, I winder?"

"Oh, I can't tell that. I got it in a present. But I would think with clasp, it would not be less than seven or eight pounds."

"Seeven or eight pounds fur da laek o yon ! da size o a penny. Na, na. Mary 'ill better begin ta use da een at da Loard an me hae geen her, an lay bi da heels a man at can gie her eight pound watches, fur I can't."

"We don't hunt men, or lure men, or lay them by the heels, either for one purpose or the other. It's they, poor simple souls, that flutter about us like moths around a candle."

"Du ye no ? Umph ! We ken aa aboot dat. Fur da flutterin business, I know not, accept at if dey du, dir no free o gettin badly singed, poor

sowls, sometimes. Weel, weel, we'll see what's left efter da ludgin an da bairn's claes is paid."

At this pronouncement Mary's face visibly brightened, for she was very anxious to have a wristlet watch, but was diffident after the extraordinary expenditure incurred in Lerwick, herself to hint at such a thing to her father. Mary was a very nice, quiet girl, but essentially a woman ; therefore loved to possess pretty things.

Joanie was found at the ludging all right, seated on a chair scanning with intense interest a jeweller's catalogue which displayed watches and chains of every size, variety, and price.

"Ye twa 'ill better tak da boy and see if ye can fin a strood at can du. Ye say ye hae a better notion o what'll set him as I. I hae twartree things ta see aboot at I can only du mesell."

"All right. Come along, Joanie."

After some little trouble a suit was found that pleased even the Tittie. As they were wending their way southwards again, Joanie carrying the parcel, they met his parent coming out of a licensed grocer's shop, the left side of his jacket protruding in rather a suspicious fashion. He had succeeded in getting the "medicine" he and Betty needed now and then.

"Oh, here you ir. So, du's gotten dee suit, boy, at lent, I see. What paid you fur her ?"

"Two guineas."

"Juist so. Heth, da money is meltin away laek da snaw. Did you meet Madam goin stamp-in along, wi her nose i da air, keekin oot her feet, an her motor veil fleeterin i da wind ahint her ?"

"No ; we did not."

"Shu wisna lookin ower weel plaesed."

"Oh-h ! I think I can tell you the cause of that."

"What ?"

"The fact is, her little affair with Mr I. is off, and the affair with Mr D. has not come on."

"I towld ye dat. Dis lasses at keeps jimpin fae wan man till anidder generally ends wi gettin non at aal. Na, na ; I say whin ye're don sae weel as ta get a howld o wan, stick till him, stick till him. Fur—"

" 'Men were deceivers ever,' " quoted the Tittie.

"Hit's no sa muckle dat, as wance dir fixed dir fixed ; dir teddered, anchored, an it's no aesy ta drag da moorins. Noo, Mary, whin doo begins—"

"Oh, leave Mary alone, Mary knows what to do, without being told by a man, who knows as much about the finer feelings as he knows what's about the blue vault of heaven."

"Maybe. I mak nae doot shu knows her business, laek aa da rest. Der made dat wye, ye kno. I'm been noticin at da boy, poor sowl, is begun ta feel da baarm wirkin. He's gotten a notion o you. Ye micht spare him a smile noo an dan."

"Oh, da boy," said the Tittie, with a laugh. "He does seem a little bit afflicted. I know how to work the boys, either young or old, I assure you. They're easily handled. It's juist a matter of lifting the little finger, you know."

"Dunna you be ower sure, my jewel."

"Faidler, faider," whispered Joanie, "ir we gaen hom da nicht?"

"Dat ir we, boy."

"Dir a boany peerie watch in dis shop at I wid laek ta hae."

"Boy, boy, du's doitin. Dee wi a watch. I didna hae a watch o mi ain till I wis twinty-nine year aald."

"Come in an aks da price o him." And taking his parent by the hand, Joanie almost hauled him into the shop.

"It's yon een at shines i da dark," Joanie said, in reply to the shopkeeper's enquiry.

"Thirty-five shillings. A nice watch. An excellent time-keeper. Luminous. Indispensable to everyone who has to get up in the dark."

"Heth, I'm gotten up i da dark aa mi life ithoot a shiny watch, an I'm here yit. Thirty-five shillins, said ye?"

"Good value for the money too, I assure you. This chain is only seven and six. Splendid value. We will make the two two pound one."

"Anidder two pound gone. So, Joanie, du'li be a man noo," as the P. M. tabled the money and Joanie fixed the chain in his waistcoat and put the watch in his pocket with a delight too deep for audible expression.

"Hae ye ony o dis kind at da lasses pits ipu dir shackle-bane?"

"A wristlet watch. Any number. What price would you like?"

"What du ye hae aboot tree pound?"

"Several at that price. There's an excellent little watch, and a good time-keeper. We will throw in this nice leather strap with it as discount."

"Tree pound. Oh, dear-a-dear. Fur da money at's huved away. Mary 'ill no live ithoot a watch noo, though. No, no. Weel, ye can parcel her up."

Groaning at the holes that were being dug in his pocket, the P. M. and Joanie coming out met the Tittie and Mary (who had been carefully examining the tempting display in the window from outside) coming in.

"Faider—"

"Lass, faider me no more. I'm aboot don ; near da brod. What's wrang wi dee noo ? "

"We saw a aafil boanie pearl brooch i da window at wid be fine fur midder."

"Heth, we most get something fur dee midder, lass. Hes du gotten aa her idder rewhirements ? "

"Yiss, everything."

"Weel, dan, afore we go in lat me see what money is left. I'm settled wi da woman, an a moaderate body shu is tu. Fower pound, six an tippence. Money ! Dis toon is da very venom fur money. Weel, I don't think I'm aawin onybody onything. So, tree pound is aboot da lent at I can go. Come in, an aks da price."

The price was three pounds fifteen.

"Weel, shu's a penny ta pay fur da laek o dat, I most say. Bit Betty laeks a bit o shine aboot her as weel as da rest, an why no ? An dan, as da owld Jews wis wint ta say, it'll maybe



come in as a kind o paece offerin. So, here's da money. Lat wis go hom, hom, hom, oot o da temptation o dis street. I'll never be richt till I get among da hills, and haul in some fresh air. Fur sic a place ! He help dem at lives in it. Noo, I tould aa da idders at we wir settin aff at five o'clock, so we'll geng hom an hae a bite, an get ready. I'm winderin if da motors 'ill howld wis an aa wir belongins."

At five o'clock the two motors stood at the door of the Grand Hotel, both already pretty well piled up with luggage of every description, to such an extent indeed that it was difficult to see where the passengers were to be accommodated. The inmates from the Queen's came in a body, carrying little except small hand-bags ; but the Tittie, Mary, the P. M. and Joanie had each parcels and light boxes of considerable dimensions still to be stowed.

The proceedings were watched by an interested crowd of boys and girls.

"Dis is da Paet Commission, min," said one.

"Whaar dev gaen ? What ir dey gaen ta du ?"

"To du ? Does du no ken dat, min ? Dir goin away ta cast paets, min."

"Cast paets ! Weemen canna cast paets."

"Can dey no ? My midder wis i da hill castin paets aa day yesterday."

"Weel, I see no tushkars."

"As I'm a leevin sinner, we're forgotten da tushkars," said the P. M. to the boy.

"Tushkars ! What need we care aboot tush-



kars ? We're not labourers. Besides, if they're needed, I can run down on Monday for them. We can't wait five minutes after tushkars."

"Dat's true. Raelly, I harly see hoo we're goin ta get aa dis stuff stowed. Get in, Mary, an bruckle desell doon yonder ; an Joanie, du can sweeze atween wis twa. More ta come yit," as the Tittie handed up a large hat-box. "I juist hope wan thing. I hope Providence 'ill keep Mr Ganson oot o da rod. He'll say we're brakin his cars ta bits. So, we're ready noo, ir we ? Aall on board ? Deck cargo, an everything stowed i da hould. We wid a needed a stevedore here, I tink. Noo, aff shu goes. Noo, mi boy, tak care o da folk. Feth, dis street is laek da folk, benklid an twistid, wi harly room fur a boady, far less a sowl."

As the cars moved slowly off, the boys gave a cheer, several held on at the back until speed was got up ; the dogs knocking about the place set up a barking and followed the retreating motors ; and when they got well below the Fort, the P. M. stood up and waved an adieu to the town in which so many events had been crowded in so short a time.

As he settled himself again in his seat—a proceeding accomplished only with difficulty—and gazed northward, he was heard to exclaim—

"Providence is not been wirkin ; fur as sure as mi name is Jirry, dere's Mr Ganson himself, staandin speaking ta T. J. Boy, set fae dee ; set fae dee as hard as du can. Give her sheet ! Mak her spin !"

## CHAPTER XXIX.

In preparation for the wedding, the P. M. "shaws da lasses hoo 'ta shak dir muslins.'"

"Ah, dis is fine," said the P. M. as the motors spanked along and soon brought them to Mont Braa and the Lady's Drive, which they quickly passed. "Here we get a coarn o da fresh air o heevan. I'm nearly been chokkid aa da time I'm been in Lerrick wi da smok an da steuch and da dirt o wan kind an anidder at lies aboot da place fur evermore. Na, na ; gie me da hills, gie me da hills, or da sea. Dere ye get Natir, fresh an pure, an ye can braethe. Non o your toons fur me. Daavid was a wise man in mair wyas as wan. 'I to da hills will lift mine eyes.' Yiss, yiss. Alto dir bare, dir not bare ta wan at haes a sowl or a mind. Da warst aboot dis motors, though, is a body canna smok very weel, bit I maun try an get da pipe up some weye."

This having been successfully accomplished, and the pipe kept going by holding his hand over it, the P.M. settled himself down to enjoy the two hours' run.

"Here's da Windy Grind comin, boys. Howld on ta your head-gear. I'm no wantin anidder rin efter mi hat. Dir wan thing I'll say aboot da Lerrick folk," he remarked to the Tittie,

“dey hae da sense ta mak fur gettin some paets. I noticed a lock o dem bissy, wi dir wye o it, i da hills whin we guid by. Of coorse, da most o dem don’t kno da job dir jokkid demsells till ; bit dey’ll laern afore Christmas — dey’ll laern, dey’ll laern. Paets is no da fun dey tink dey ir.”

“Are we going along Huxter for a cup of tea ? ” asked the Tittie.

“Tae, tae, tae ; ye’ll be da colour o tae afore ye’re mairied. Do ye kno at tae spoils da complexion ; and whaar wid ye be ithoot da boanie colour in your cheeks.”

“I’ve only had four cups to-day, and that’s not much. I find that men can take tea quite as well as women, and we hear nothing about their complexions. I would give anything for a cup of tea just now.”

“Weel, heth, its a peety at you sood want dat. My money is aboot don, bit I daarsay der anoff left ta praside dat. We’ll geng alang Huxter on wan condition.”

“What’s that ? ”

“At whin da tae is gettin ready, ye’ll sing yon sang aboot love an da peerie boy.”

“You seem to have a great notion of that song.”

“Yiss, I do. Its a boanie peerie sang, an it suits you, an ye sing it fine.”

“Oh, well, if that’s all, we’ll manage that, I think. And what about yourself ? Will you give ‘The Deil’s Awa ’ full sheet ? ”

“Na, na ; ‘Da Deil ’ needs a lock o preparation, baid inside an oot. ‘Da Deil ’ is no

suitable, as ye wid say, fur a tae-pairty ; he needs somethin stronger as dat. Na, I'll juist listen dis time. Heth, we're no far fae Huxter noo. I'se tell da driver ta stop dere fur twartree meenits."

In a few minutes the motors brought up at the famous inn. As the party alighted, Spark came bounding up to the P. M., wagging his tail, barking his welcome in joyous tones.

"Oh, dis is dee, Spark, is it. Fine fellow, fine fellow. So, so, min, dunna jimp oot o dee skin. Man, a dug is a fine thing. I laek a dug. Wance he taks a notion o you, he never slips it. Weel, bairns, we'll better geng in, I suppose, an see if da folk can gie wis a cup o tae."

Tea would be ready in a quarter of an hour, they were told.

"Noo, my jewel, come on wi da sang. We dunna hae sae muckle time da nicht as we hed da last time we wir here. Dat wis da time. Bairns, dat wis a rare nicht an moarnin. We'll never see da laek again."

As the Tittie sang in clear, true voice, to Miss G.'s accompaniment, the pretty song, "Love was once a Little Boy," the P. M. watched the face of the youth who was so badly smitten by her charms.

"He's in a bad wye, puir soul. Da calf love hes taen a strong hould o him. He's juist at da age. I mind da feelin mesell, fine. It maks you kind o seek, sometimes."

When Mr D. went up and complimented the singer, spoke to her as if she were an ordinary mortal, and even joked and laughed, the boy

glared at him in a way which showed that he would willingly have buried a thousand javelins in his body. The idea of any man speaking without awe and reverence to his adored. The look was not lost on the Tittie who threw him a bright glance which put him in the seventh heaven, but did not make him forgive Mr D.

"Miss G. is going to oblige by giving a piano solo," said the Tittie, "so please silence."

"Madam is goin to give wis a slasheration on da piana, is she? Weel, heth, dat's wan thing shu can du. Shu can tinkle tinkle, an rumble rumble on her, bit what its aa aboot da Loard alon knos, fur I dont."

The most interesting part of the performance to the onlookers was the intense interest that Mary, and in a less degree Joanie, displayed in watching Miss G. Neither kept their eyes off her fingers for a moment. "As shu rumbled i da bess, an tinkled i da treeble, an smashed her i da middle, an ran up an doon ower wan haand efter da idder laek a cat efter a moose," as the P. M. described Miss G.'s performance, their amazement held them speechless; and when after a crashing chord, the solo was brought to a conclusion, Mary looked at her with eyes filled with wonder and admiration.

"Feth, da next thing at Mary 'ill be wantin is a piana. I see dat in her eye. Da bairns is aa found o music, you kno. Of coorse dey took dat aff o me. Bit heth, I don kno. My music didna cost me muckle. I juist used da instrument at da Loard gie me—mi voice, da best o da lot. Bit noo, dis lasses maun hae pianas an or-

gans an what dey caa gramaphones, an dis thing an da nixt, an dey dont use da voice, at costs nothin at aal, an its da best o aa. I don kno. I kno wan thing. Da most expensive thing a man can hae in dis world is a faimly. Dir no end ta what dey want. A fiddle, boy? A fiddle? Ah, yea, if we could get a fiddle, noo, I wid say somethin. I winder if der a fiddler i da place? Man, I wid gie onything ta hae a Shetland reel. I wid laek ta shaw dis lasses hoo ta shak dir muslins."

"What are you saying about muslins?" asked the Tittie, who had overheard the P. M.'s remark.

"I wis juist sayin ta Joanie, wha wis askin if dir wisna a fiddle aboot da place—he doesna laek dis pianas—at I wid laek ta hae a Shetland reel, juist ta shaw ye twa what ta du at da weddin next week—hoo ta shak your muslins, as we say."

"Shake our muslins? I don't understand."

"It's nae winder ye dont understand, fur da lasses noo-a-days, don't hae da sense ta wear muslins ta set demsells aff. Dey aa go in fur dis cowl'd sylks an saatens, no da warm muslin, an dey dress demsells aa ta da lent. Dir nae breadth wi dem, as ye wid say. An dan dey go ta dis dances an balls an slidder alang da fluir hingin on, wuppid aroond da men, as da wife said, laek weet tangles. No, no; give me da muslin an some shape an form. Man, I'm seen da muslin frocks biggid up fae da boddam ta da tap wi floonces, an on da airms tu, till a peerie lass wis a daecent size, an as fur da big eens, Loard luv'e you! as



dey wir mair laek coarn screws as onything else. An dan dey wid hae red bows, an blue bows, an sometimes yellow bows stuck here an dere, an a bit o reebin i da hair, you kno, ta feenish dem aff. An whin ye saw aboot twinty couple in a Shetland reel, wi aa da floonces jimpin up an doon at wan time, feth, it wis a boanie sicht. Dat's da meanin o shakkin da muslins. A dance, my jewel, a Shetlan reel wi da fiddler wi twa stiff glesses in him givin sheet ta "De Deil Amung da Tailors," or "Da Sailor Ower da Ruff Tree." An feth some o da owld chaps could gie her sheet. Dey could mak her snore, an mak you dance if ye wir as solemn as a owld coo. Gie me da fiddle, gie me da fiddle, if ye want life, an if ye want your bluid ta shiver i da smaa o your back. I'll go oot een noo an see if der sic a thing as a fiddle ta be hed, fur I wid laek ta see you an Madam shakin da bits o things ye hae ipu you Heth, its no muckle."

"I think it would be more to the point to have our cup of tea first."

"Weel, dir nae hairm in dat. I'da meantime I'se go an see if dir a fiddler ta be hed, fur I want ta shaw you hoo da thing is don afore da weddin comes aff."

Not many minutes elapsed ere the P. M. was back with an oldish man whom he had unearthed, who was carrying a fiddle much older than himself.

"Here we ir, noo. Clear da decks, boys, an lat wis set tu."

"Here's your tea."

"Well, we can tak it, bit we're not needin it."



We hed somethin up at da fiddler's hoose."

"There's no room for dancing here. The room is full of furniture."

"Du ye mean ta tell me at ye wid lat twar-tree bits o shairs an tables an things staand i da wye o a dance? Hae, boy, tak howld o dis shair an set her ootside. We'll shune clear da room. Every man gie a haand. Da nicht is fine, an da things 'ill get nae hairm. I'm spoken ta da man, an he says we can dance if we can fin room. Feth, we'll mak room."

In a twinkling the room was denuded of all impedimenta except the sideboard and the piano.

"What are we to do?" asked Mr D.

"I'll shune shaw you what ta du. We'll mak twa sets, an dir juist room ta move. Noo, my jewel (to the Tittie) come ye here; an boy, come dee wis here tu. (Jirry purposely made the Tittie the love-struck swain's partner). I'll tak Joanie wi me, fur dir not enough weemen ta geng roond. Heth, I'm seen da day whin it was da idder wye aboot. Mary, du'll go wi' dis man here i da idder set, fur doo haes some idee what ta du; an Miss G. ill geng alang wi Mr D. Dir twa sets o six, an da woman o da hoose said shu wid come an mak up a pair, so we'll tak her wi wiz. Noo, I tink we're kind o wye paired, as ye wid say. Dir twa men in weemen's places, bit we canna help dat."

"But what have we to do?" asked Mr D.  
"What figures have we to make?"

"Ye're got ta dance, an follow da weemen, a thing at man is been duin ever fae da time at

shu wis cut oot o Adam's ribs. If shu laeds you inta wheer wyes, dir nothin new in dat, I assure you. Noo, my Tittie, at a perteeclar time i da spring, whin I roar 'Reel O,' ye come dis wye an go dat wye, an turn roond, an go back ta whaar ye cam frae, an dan leesh at. Your pairtner generly pits his haands ipu your shudders an shuves you afore him."

"Is that necessary?"

"Yiss, its necessary. Weemen hes ta be guided in a dance bi man as weel as in everything else."

"Pouff! For their guidance. I know," retorted the Tittie, with a toss of her pretty head.

"Noo, Maikie, lay on da rossid, an mak her snore. Gie wis da "Shaals o Fooles" first. Noo, Joanie, mi boy, shak dee feet. Du hed a midder, min, at could shak her muslins wi da best o dem in her day. Madam is no makin muckle o it, I see. Shu kens no what ta du, and shu's no tryin, an shu's standin as stiff as a poker, pittin oot wan fit twa inches an da tidder een aboot twa an a whaarter. Reel O, mi beauties! Dis wye, Tittie. Noo boy, howld on till her as lang as du can. Dis wye, Joanie, min; du's geen wrang. Change da reel. Dere shu goes. 'Ahint da Daeks o Voe.' Noo, set fae you. Keek oot dee feet, min, an turn roound. Hooch! Folk, why don't you hooch? Try da hoarnpipe, noo, Joanie. Man, du's young an soople. 'Oh fur Een an Twinty, Tam, I wid lat you see hoo ta dance. Reel O again! Come on, boys. Da owld chap is waarmin ta da wark! Dere shu goes

again—‘Aff shu goes ta Meerimashee.’ A fine spring dat. Heth, da Tittie is doing weel. Hooch, woman, hooch. You can’t dance a Shetlan reel ithoot a hooch !”

By this time the fiddler had thoroughly warmed up to the work. His head lay pretty well on his left shoulder ; every now and then, as visions of earlier days flitted across his mind, the said head would be quickly twisted half round, the eyes closed, and the mouth tightly shut ; while all the time he kept time by vigorously moving his right foot up and down.

“‘Da Mirry Boys o Greenland.’ Roond shu goes again, boys. Reel O. Noo, Joanie, du’s geen wrang again, min. Du’s no gotten a notion o da Tittie, tu, is du ? Heth, ye’re duin weel, my jewel, an Mary is no bad. Mary is ower solemn, though. Shu taks dat aff o da midder, ye kno. Bit view ye Madam. Shu’s about don, an fair disgustid, fae da look o hir. Na, fur her, fur her.”

“I can hold out no longer,” said the Tittie, almost piteously.

“Juist wan reel more. Dere shu is. ‘Kail an Knockid Coarn.’ Double reel, twice roound. Boy, du’s hed dee a nicht o it dis nicht. Du can tank me fur dat. Noo, a proper feenish, wi tree hoochs, an dan we’re don.”

“Weel, atween da warm wadder, an mi new suit, an mi ticht collar, an mi heavy buits, an da wark, I’m rinnin doon. Bit we’re hed a dance, a rael dance. Du ye understand noo about shakin yere muslins ?”

"I do indeed. This is sheer physical exertion, hard work."

"Weel, it is dat wye. Bit next week ye'll ken mair about it, I can tell you, efter ye're danced fur tree days."

"Three days ! You're joking."

"Not I. Tree days, an nothin under it. A weddin widna be richt under tree days' an tree nichts' dancin."

"We'll surely have long rests between."

"Oh, ye get bits o rests, nae doot ; bit I assure you, da lasses howld oot a lang time at a weddin."

"I don't kno what they do, but really this is overpowering. We must have another cup of tea after this."

"Yiss, an I'll hae ta go an see efter da fiddler. Puir sowl, he's don weel. He needs somethin in his mooth tu."

After this had been attended to, and the company had had a refreshing cup of tea, and had got somewhat cooled down, the P. M. said, "da men 'ill better gie a haand ta pit da things back," a hint they promptly took, and in a few minutes the room had resumed its normal appearance. The impromptu dance was voted a great success by everyone except Miss G., who expressed the opinion that it was "vulgar, and only fit for clodhoppers."

"So. I never expetid at her high heels an her turned-up nose wid tak ta da laek o dis. Shu's wan o da weet tangle kind. So bairns, we will hiv ta go. I never expetid ta hae dis bit o rant."

Bit min, it does you guid. It shaks up yere blod, an maks ye feel young again. Ye're aa in, ir ye ? So. Weel, dan, aff shu goes, an hom, hom, hom."

## CHAPTER XXX.

**Da P. M. arrives hom and "Gets his kail troo da reek."**

THE two motors "stoored for hom," as the P. M. described it, without further break or adventure. The night was fine, and as they tore along the familiar roads, Jerry became more like his old self. By the time Hillswick Hotel was reached, he felt he had "shakken da last atom o dust o Lerrick aff o his feet," and that he could breathe freely, without the feeling that he was drawing impure matter into his lungs.

"How will we account for being so late?" asked the Tittie, as they neared the hotel.

"Weel, if a woman canna tell a bit o a white lee, an canna kill a cat ony idder wye dan bi shokin her wi butter, shu's not a true douchter o Eve, dats aal I kno. Tell dem if dey aks at wan o da motors brook doon ipu da road, or at we met wan at wis brokken doon; or we hed ta geng along Huxter ta see a owld freend o mine, a fiddler. Tell dem onythin ye laek, or juist say at we wir detained ipu da wye."

"Ye're been you a boanie dim," said Meggie, who met the party at the door. "Da ham freezlid oot o aa kennin, an da fish dry, an da tae laek bark, an da tost as hard as a piece o ston. What's come ower you? I expecid you more as a hoor

ago bi da telegraph you sent fae Lerrick."

"Is dis dee, Meggie? Is du no mairried yit? Never du mind, I ken o a fine owld young man at wid be blied ta get dee. I'se tell him ta come alang da moarn's nicht, an ye micht mak it up. Heth, does du kno, he hes ten pound i da War Lon."

"I'se Lon him. Auld young man! He'll better come!"

"Weel, my jewel at du is, da young eens is aa pretty weel occipeed een noo, so du'll maybe hae ta tak him or dan want. It's plain ta be seen at du's no geen up hoops yit."

"Never mind, Maggie, what he says. Like all the men, he thinks that women are thinking about nothing else but them all their lives," interposed the Tittie. "Just you make a fresh cup of tea while we take our things off. The rest will be all right."

"Dat'll it, I'm shure," said the P. M., "Mony is da time I'm taen waur an been tankfil ta get it. An as fur da tae, I can tak hit as black as pitch, ony time; bit da lasses is mair pirteeclar noo-a-days as dir midders wis. Da pot wis wint ta staand at da fire aa day, far less a hoor, i da aald times."

"An hoo is aa da rest o da folk, Meggie," asked the P. M. when the party had all got settled round the table and had begun to take their tea.

"Oh, dir no sae bad. Dir better, an dir been oot."

"An what ir dey been duin?"

"Dir been fishing, an walkin aboot, an read-



in, an writin, an aetin, an sleepin, an—

“Buggerisin aboot da boos o da Novice, as da man said?”

“Faider, faider,” ejaculated Mary in a tone of entreaty, “you soodna say bad wirds afore da leddies;” while the Tittie exclaimed, “Mr Laurensen!”

“Lass (addressing Mary), howld dee wheest. Beggin da ladies’ pardon in a wye, it’s no sic a bad wird as ye come across i da very best books at ye read.”

“And what does it mean, precisely,” asked Mr D.

“It means (heth, Meggie is made a good job o dis ham an brunies. I tink if I was younger, an wisna teddered, I wid mak fur Meggie meself), it means a body purlin aboot a thing, ye kno—”

“Purlin? What’s purlin? Purring, you mean?”

“Not at aal. It’s only cats at purrs. Purlin means—weel,—weel, ye kno, purlin juist means purlin. I don’t kno hoo else ye can describe it.”

“The word conveys no meaning to me.”

“Weel, dan, its juist somethin laek dis. A body at’s purlin aboot a thing is juist gaen roond aboot it, as ye wid say, pretending ta be duin somethin, makin a appearance o wirkin, bit not duin onything, niver comin ta ony sense, ye ken. Dey purl, an purl, an purl, an never git ony farder, an yet aa da time ye wid tink at dey wir wirkin.”

“Well, then, that word could express your meaning as well as the other.”

“Ye’re wrang, sir. It could not. Purl is mair aboot peerie things, bit bug—”

“Faider.”

“Bit da idder wurd is fur bigger things. Laek dis, ye see—Ye wid spaek aboot a woman purlin aboot a hoose, bit a man bug—weel, dan, thing-a-me-jiggin aboot a ship.”

“I see.”

“Da boos o da Novice wis a ship, ye see ; an dis wurd wis used bi a man at wis makin a du o duin a lok, bit it never cam ta onything, bit he wis alwis at it. In fac, as da books wid say, purlin ye micht caa feminine, an bug—, ah,—ah—isin, masculine. It’s spoken aboot bigger things, an men’s wark of coorse is alwis bigger as weemen’s. Dat’s only naitril, fur dir bigger demsells.”

“Yes, in their own opinion,” said the high-heeler.

“Noo, bairns, tank da Loard fur aa His mercies. We’re hed a gude tae, an I maun tak da bairns an mak fur hom. Betty ’ill hae some-thin ta say baid aboot bein late, an aboot some-thin mair, I hae nae doot. We’ll tak da motor ta pit wis ower ; he’ll no be lang, dat’s wan thing. Noo, dir wan thing ye most not forget da moarn. Every wan maun be at da kirk at twal o’clock, rain or shine. Ye see, I’m a elder meself, an I never neglec goin ta da hoose o da Loard, or Betty edder, whin shu’s fit, or da bairns, whin dir able. Dat’s wan thing I can say aboot da faimly. Couldna some o you come an gie wis a haand i da whire ? I alwis go i da whire meself,

I hae a idee at its mair dignifeed, as ye wid say, fur a elder, an mair as wan, ta be i da whire, as ta laeve da singin aa ta young folk."

"Yes, but some of the old people's voices are gone," said the high-heeler, "and frequently they only spoil what would otherwise be good singing."

"Maybe. I hae me nown openion about dat."

"No, I don't think we'll go in the choir," said the Tittie ; "but I'll tell you what might be done. A special praise service could be held in the evening, and we could give some solos and duets, and perhaps even a quartette or two. And a special collection could be taken for the Red Cross."

"Dat wid be fine,—graand. Da folk wid laek ta hear da Paet Commission giein a consort, I kno, edder i da kirk or i da schule, a lock better as seein dem tryin ta cast paets, alto dat's a bit o fun too, or askin whestins aboot paets i da kirk. Dat's a graand idee."

"Do you think that Betty would do anything at the concert ? Sing a solo, or take part in a duet ?"

"E-e-e-h-m. I don kno. I don kno aboot dat. Betty hed da voice in her day, though. Ah, yiss. It's not bad yit. I'll see. I'll broach da subject, an see what lude shu's on. Dir precaarious insecs, dis weemen, ye kno. Bit I'll be ower in guid time to spaek ta da minister, so at he could gie it oot fae da pupit aboot da sacred consort at night."

"Very well. We'll employ the evening in

drawing up and getting ready a programme. I hope both Betty and you will take part. We'll meet you at the church to-morrow and then we'll learn what you mean to do. Shall we send over the motor to take you to the church in the morning ? ”

“ No, no ; dat you shan't do. It's a braa bit o gait ta da kirk frae wir hoos, bit alto I don't tink Betty 'ill be oot i da moarnin if shú sings at nicht, I an da bairns 'ill bastle troo. We'll need ta laeve aboot twa hoors afore da kirk gengs in, bit mony is da time I'm dune it, an da bairns tu, an we can juist du it again. Dir wid be a taakin an a afflay if da neebors saw da motor comin ta tak wis ta da kirk. Dir plenty already, I can tell you, an whin dey see Mary's new rig-oot an falde-rals, an da watches, an Joanie's new strood, no ta mention me nown, da half o da perish 'ill be at da kirk ta behould wis, if dey sood come fur nothin else. So, bairns, come awa.”

“ So, ye're com, i da lang an da lent,” said Betty, as the trio stepped in to the house.

“ Yae, tank Guid, we're here, aa safe an soon,” replied her other half.

“ Nae tanks ta dee fur dat, fae aa at I'm heard.”

“ Heard ? What's du heard ? ”

“ What am I no heard ? Da bit o bairn is been near droondid, an he's been lost, an he's been ill ; an it's da Loard's mercies at he's leevin at aall ; it's not been wi dy care. No, no. dis is da last time he's go oot o my sicht. Dan du's been makin a dereeshin o desell, playin

billards i da hotels, cairyin on laek a fule, as du alwis wiss, huvin oot money laek shals, borrowin money an spendin more, an buyin as muckle ta pit ipu dee ain back as wid cled da hale neebirhood fur twinty year. Yiss, an more as dat. Spendin money ipu idder weemen—”

“ Idder weemen ! Does du caa Mary an deesell idder weemen ? ”

“ No, I don’t ; bit yon twa wheeper-snappers, twa bits o lasses taen fae da schule, upliftid wi bein amang jantlemen—alto, Loard knos, dir a wheer kind o antry at doos wan o—goin gein dem froacks an hats, an He alon knos hoo muckle else. I kno it’ll be muckle at I’m gotten at’s toiled fur dee an dy bairns aa mi days.”

“ An why sood I no be neeberly ta da twa bits o lasses, as du caas dem, bi gien dem a bit o a rig-oot fur da weddin ? Dir been kind ta me, an dey could aesy hev been very nesty, fur as du says richt anoff, alto I’m amung dem, I’m not wan o de min ony wye accept knoin da wark. An fur what du’s gotten, du’ll better juist wait intil du sees. I kno wan thing, amung dee, an Mary, an da boy, da maist o da money wis spent, accep ipu meself.”

“ An so it sood. Non hes a better richt till it. An what fur is du been spendin money laek da very saand o da sea ipu desell ? ”

“ Woman, you don’t understand. A man can’t get paid twinty-five pound a week, an his livin, an his traivellin expenses, firby haein a found laid by fir extrees, bi da Governint o da nation, ithoot shawin somethin fur it. Da thing

is oot o da whestin. Does du dress waur as dee neebirs ? ”

“ No, I don’t, alto, Loard knos, its mostly bi me ain haands at I’m been able ta pit a daacent rag ipu me back.”

“ Very weel, dan, I hed ta get things ta mak mesell daacent amung yon folk. I hed ta get dis, an dat, an da idder thing afore I could tak mi place, so ta spaek. Of coorse it cam to mair as I expetid, bit da thing hed ta be don, an da most o it ’ill no hae ta be don again fur a while. Forby, dir a found, as I wis sayin, fur extrees, an I’ll laekly get da most o it back again.”

“ Back or no back, dir wis nae caal fur wastin sae muckle money. Hoo can du get da money back oot o da found ? ”

“ Weel, du sees, dis Govirnment folk said dey wid spend sae much on dis Commission every year fur tree year at laest ; an it’s juist foo we wirk da thing at onything is left fur extrees.”

“ Yiss, bit I wid tink at da folk wid aks what da extrees wis fur. Dae shurly hae dat muckle gumpshon. Dir no sic fules as ta caa weemen’s froacks an hats an men’s claes extrees fur da wark o a Commission ? ”

“ I don’t suppose dey ir. Bit sees du, my lamb, dir mair wyas o killin a dug dan wi a ston. Every member pits in his papers aboot his extrees. Dir postages, an extree travilling, an deteenmints on da rod, an brak doons, an best o aa, dir what dey caa miscellaneous. Ye can get a pooer shived inta miscellaneous. Its laek da ‘circumstance i da minister’s eye ’—it covers a lok. Oh, I tink



I'll get da best pairt o what I'm spent back yit."

"Weel, if du kent dat, an if du could pit in aa yon, an get money fae yon extree found, why in heeven's name did du go an heave da money away? Du could a hed da money."

"My Betty, da money is not been heaved away. Mary, get oot dee basket. Sees du dat," handing Betty the pearl brooch.

"Muckle need I hae fur pearl broches, vargin i da byre," she said, eyeing the brooch, all the same, with evident satisfaction.

"Du's no i da byre every moment i dee life. Du gengs ta da kirk noo an dan; an heth, du's ta go da moarn, fur a special purpose at I'll tell dee aboot efter du's seen aa at we're boucht."

As Mary unloaded the basket, unloosed the parcels, and spread before her mother the many and various things they had bought, all of the best quality, all nice and becoming, for all of which she had been sighing for many, many years, Betty relaxed considerably, and gradually became mollified. And when Joanie brought and showed her his "shiny" watch, and chain, and his new suit, she relapsed so far into her old self as to say,

"Mary, tak awa aa dis things an mak a cup o tae. I feel kind o owercome." And taking Joanie's hand in one hand, and patting it with the other, she lay back in the chair and closed her eyes.

"Midder, here's you a cup o tae."

"So, so, gude bliss dee, my dautie. Oh, bairns, bairns, sit in an tak a cup o tae. Da Loard hadd His haand aboot wiz aa."



The tea had a reviving effect upon Betty, and, indeed, upon them all. The storm in a tea-cup had passed, and the quartette felt more at ease after the first instalment of the refreshing beverage, accompanied by a bit of nice cake from Lerwick, had been discussed.

"Mary, what's yon at du's gotten ipu dee haand?" her mother asked.

"Dis is a wrislet watch at faider gie me."

"Fur dat, fur dat. A fule an his money is shune pairted. What paid he fur da laek o yon?"

"Never du mind what I paid. Here's dee second cup. Tak her up. Da lass hed ta hae a watch as weel as da boy, an yon kind is aa da fashion noo."

"Laekly, laekly. Everything upside doon. Lasses wearin watches ipu dir haands, an gaen about half cled, wi bits o gossamer socks instead o warm white Shetlan oo stockings, an apein da men, wi dir waalkin sticks an dir lang buits, an wirkin in offices and shops, an taechin i da schules, instead o stayin at hom wirkin an knittin an readin dir Bible, an learnin hoo ta be wives. Ah, less-a-less! Less-a-less! Dey'll be praechin nixt."

"Dat juist pits me in mind, my Betty, at dir goin ta be a sacred consort i da kirk da moarn's nicht bi dis Paet Commission folk, or some o dem; an I'm alwis been sayin at du hed a guid voice i dee day—"

"Oh, dat's juist laek dee, fule at doo is."

"Weel, didna du?"

"I'm no saying bit what da Loard gae me a voice."

“Yiss feth, an a good voice too. Does du no mind dat time, my Betty, at we wir wint ta sing ‘Dere’s a Land dat is Fairer dan Day,’ tagedder?”

“Oh, Jirry, Jirry,” and the tears began to flow down Betty’s cheeks.

—“‘An by faeth we can see it afar—’”

“Jirry, say no more ; say no more.”

“I’se say no more, my lamb. Bit I was tinkin, seein at da folk wis wantin dee ta sing, at we micht try dat owld hyme tagedder.”

“Jirry, I couldna du it. I couldna. I wid brak doon.”

“I don kno. Da consort is ta help wir puir sodgers an sailors at’s fechtin fur wis, an shurly we oucht ta try ta du what we can. It’s no muckle we can du.”

“Weel, weel, I’se see, I’se see. I’ll du what I can. Jirry, go an read a shapter i da Bible afore we geng ta rest.”

## CHAPTER XXXI.

"No, no," says the P. M., "if ye want richt kirk singin, give me 'Stroodwattir' an da rael owld njaarm."

THE family were up betimes next morning, for, as the P. M. had said, the journey to church occupied two hours, and as he wished to leave about half-past nine in order to have a few minutes before the service to see the minister regarding the sacred concert in the evening, breakfast was ready at half-past eight. "I alwis laek ta hae two comfortable draas efter a mael, you know, edder Sunday or Setterday," he was wont to say.

"Noo, Betty," he said, when he had got the pipe under weigh after breakfast, "What's du tinkin ?"

"Jirry, I don't know what ta tink, or what ta say. I wid laek ta help wi onything fur wir puir sodgers and sailors,—Oh, what's wir Jeemie duin, what's he duin ? an whaar is he ? He alon knows at can keep His haand aboot him on da sea as weel as on da laand—bit my singin days is ower, Jirry, ower, ower," said Betty with a deep sigh

"Betty, dy singin days is no more ower as mine ; an alto I say it meself, I'm not faered edder to go i da whire an sing a Psalm or a hyme, or even sing a sang, wi some o dem at's a hantle younger. Do sood a heard me at Huxter."

"Oh, yea, I'm heard aboot dat, an I want ta hear nae mair aboot it. Dis is no a day ta be spaekin aboot Huxters an singin profane sangs. No, no. Weel, du'll juist hae ta see what da minister tinks. I'll laeve it ta him. He's a person o some judgmint, an if he tinks at da folk wid laek ta hear a aald neebir singin a aald hyme, I'se du what I can. I'll no lat ony feelins at I hae staand i da wye."

"Noo, dat's some sense, I wid say. We'll be back fae da kirk in time ta hae a bit o a rin-ower tagedder o da hyme, juist ta get aa da wirds, fur da nots we kno weel anof, I kno."

"Yae, yae, dat we du, an da wirds tu, fur my pairt."

"Weel, weel, du'll look fur da book, an hae her ready."

"Dat'll no tak me lang. Mary, what's aa dis at du's gat ipu dee?"

"Dis mi new hat an a bloose, an—"

"Yiss, I see dat. Bit here's dis dereeshan o a watch, an a bangle, an open socks, an bits o shune at's only fit fur a draain room. No, no. Da hat an da bloose du may wear, bit da rest not. Goin ta da Hoose o da Loard owerlaid wi broches an chains an bangles, jinglin an tinklin bress—it canna be gold—laek a Hottentot. No. If dat's da fashin I'll never hev it said at I fell in wi it in my faimly as lang as I hae a wird ta say. So, lay aa yon aff an pit daecent stockins an buits ipu dee feet or dan bide hame. Oot da door du doesna stramp wi aa yon ipu dee."

Mary, poor thing, who knew her mother of

old, realised that she had to do either one thing or the other ; and as she was exceedingly anxious to let the other girls see her new hat and blouse, she shed herself of her ornaments, much as she inwardly rebelled at the proceeding.

“ An Joanie, du’s got on da whole o dee new strood ? I kno no. I tink du’ll better pit on dee aald Sunday troosers, an de black kaep. Da boys ’ill laugh at dee comin dressed up laek yon. An Jirry, I raelly toucht du hed more sense, alto why I sood a toucht it I don’t kno. Here’s du, a man o sixty wi a faimly, dressed desell up as pirskeet as if du’d come oot a baand-box, wi a new suit, an broon legginns ; an a new hat, an ties an collars, an watches an chains. Bit I see no signs o da Bible. No, no. Nat wan o you is got her. Oh, fur dis venity an pride. Jirry, I did tink at du hed a grain o sense, an at du wisna sic a fule as ta be prood an upliftid.”

“ Weel, Betty, du knos—”

“ I’m hevin no ‘ knos ’ about it. I hae more respec fur wir name—fur da name o da faimly, as ta lat dee an da bits o bairns geng ta da kirk dressed up in a wye ye’re not been wint, juist becaas du’s happened ta faa inta twartree pennies wi dis Paet Commission, mair laek bits o bairns at’s gotten a new lallie an wants ta shaa it ta everyeen at comes in. I never fell doon an worshipped money in mi life, an I’m no gain ta begin noo.”

“ Du never hed muckle ta worship. Dat’s maybe da raeson.”

“ Dat’s not da raison. Folk at hes sense don’t go an dress demsells laek peacocks becaas

dey happen ta hae twartree shillins."

"Dan du'll no wear da broch da nicht ?"

"Da broch is a different thing aatagedder. It's harly seen, an firby, a broch is fur howldin things tagedder. It's juist a big preen."

("Heth," said Jirry to himself, "shu's a pretty expensive preen.") Aloud—"Weel, my Betty, du's sayin juist da very same as I'm been sayin meself—"

"Weel, it's not what du's duin, dan."

"Weel, da folk seemed ta think, du knows, at—"

"Is du at dy time o life ta be towld what ta do an what ta pit on bi idder folk ?"

"Weel, dir nae time ta staand an argee aboot it. I'se pit on mi owld Sunday hat an troosers, an tak aff dis leggins, an dan we'll aa set aff. Mary an Joanie 'ill no laek dis avaa. Dey wir expecin ta wear aa dir new finery, I assure dee."

"Mary an Joanie hes ta be shaan an towld what's richt, as weel as deeself. Dear-a-dear ! It's not wan thing a wife an a midder hes ta du. Du can tell da minister I'se try to be ower if he tinks I sood sing."

As the trio stepped out over the brig-stanes and made their way at a brisk pace churchwards, Betty, after gazing after them for a time, not without a feeling of pride and an atom of remorse, settled herself for a brief respite before clearing away the breakfast things and making preparations for the dinner. She took from the back of a bookcase some old and somewhat faded hymn books, an old Bible, and tracts as aged, and sat

for a long time looking over them, sighing every now and then as she recalled many happy days and memories of long ago. Turning up the hymn she meant to sing at the church in the evening, she said, addressing the spirits, for no one was present,

“Bairns, I dunna ken ; I dunna ken. Mi voice canna be what shu wis wint. An dan da folk noo-a-days dey sing sae different, ye ken. It’s aa up an doon, streecht ahead, as da men says, an whick, an shune don, an wi a sort o a ‘dat job is jobbid’ wye. Dir no njaarm wi dem. Oh, dear-a-dear ! I mind Eppie Renelson’s midder. What a lovely njaarm shu hed ! It made you cowl’d ta listen till her. Aye, an shu’s cowl’d noo tu. Lat me see,

‘Deres a laand dat is fairer dan day,  
An by faith we can see it afar.’

Bairns, shu’s no sae bad yet. I’ll maybe get troo. An Jirry, yae Jirry hed da voice in his day. Oh, yiss. Whin he wid com in ipu da ‘By-an-byes,’ efter da ‘sweet,’ it wis juist hert-rendin.”

To make sure that there would be no mistake with the words, Betty read them over and over again, although she knew each by heart ; and sang the whole hymn twice over.

The P. M. and his offspring made good progress on their journey. When the “hom” was out of sight, Joanie unbuttoned his jacket, displaying his watch chain to which his shiny watch was affixed, and to which he referred every quarter of an hour ; and Mary, putting her hand in her pocket, took therefrom her wristlet watch and fastened it in its proper place. Each had been



shed by their mother of a good deal of their new apparel, of which they were naturally pleased and proud ; but they considered it was going too far to deprive them of their beloved watches.

“ Hillo, Jirry, is dis dee ? alto, beggin your pardin, I sud redder say Mr Laurenson,” said Arty Makomson, an old acquaintance, who with his family was also on the road to the church.

“ An why sood du say Mr Laurenson ? Imna I juist da sam at I wis ? ”

“ Yiss, du is in a wye ; bit du’s wan o dis Paet Commission noo—wan o da jantry, so ta spaek.”

“ Yiss, so ta spaek. My Arty at du is, alto I’m wan o dem, an alto I’m gotten a new jacket, dats not ta say I’m onything else as I wis. Hoo is da wife ? ”

“ Oh, shu’s no sae bad ; kind o back an fore. An hoo is Betty ? ”

“ Shus juist da sam—back an fore. Bit does do kno, Arty, shus goin ta du somethin da nicht shu hesna don fur therty year.”

“ Loard’s mercy ! What’s dat ? ”

“ Shu’s goin ta sing i da kirk at a sacred consort at dir gettin up fur da Red Cross.”

“ Ah—a—h. Betty hed da voice in her day. Dat shu hed. An dan her njaarm ! Does du mind her an Lowra at da meetins we used ta hae ? Man, whin da two o dem got up an sang some o dis Sankey’s tagedder, dir wis nothin at could baet it—nothin. I never heard twa at could do what you wid caa da feenished touch o da njaarm tagedder, better,—never. An is Betty singin hersell ? ”

"No, shu's not. Dey want me ta sing wi her."

"Dat's better still. Ah—a—h, min, i dee day dir wisna a voice i da perrish laek dine, per-teeclearly on da low nots. Noo, I wid say some-thin if du an Betty wid sing 'Dir's a laand'—"

"Man, dat's very funny. Dat's da very thing we're goin ta sing. Bit Arty, whin we wir aa young an singin baid in kirk an schule, du wis wint ta hae a good tenor voice, too. I daarsay he's not bad yit."

"Ah, dat's true anof in a wye, bit he's gon, my Jirry, gon. Min, dis herrin fishin, an da haaf, an da Faera fishing, an Iceland, an da Strets an Greenland, an sailin, an roarin efter da dugs an da sheep ida hill, taks away your voice. It does, I assure you. Na, I could du nothin ; bit I kno wan thing, whin Lowra hears at dee an Betty is goin to sing, ta da kirk shu'll go, if shu sood craal, an so 'ill I."

While this conversation was going on, the younger members of the respective families had made up to, and were taking the "size" of each other. The girls belonging to Arty had taken the whole of Mary in in one glance, down to her boots, which they were rather surprised to see were no better than their own. But her hat and blouse, not to mention the wristlet watch, excited their warmest admiration, not unmixed with a "kennin" of envy. Their brother, Willie, in a sort of fashion, noticed that Joanie's jacket was different from that he last saw him wear, but the fact did not trouble him. The watch-chain, and

the watch, however, were two things he had for months wished to possess, and these two articles of Joanie's excited his keenest interest.

"Whaar did du get da watch an chain, Joanie?"

"I got dem in Lerrick fae faider. Faider is a Paet Commissioner noo, an hes plenty o money."

"So is my faider."

"He's nothin o da kind."

"He is sot. He wis i da paets yesterday."

"I'da paets! Dat's no laek being a paet Commissioner, min."

"What is it, dan."

"A Paet Commissioner is wan at goes about in motors an akses whestins."

"An wha peys dem?"

"Da Governmint."

"Weel, I heard my faider sayin he wis goin on dis Paet Commission too. He said he kent o nothin at paid better. Dan I'll get a watch an chain tu."

"Maybe du will. Bit he's no gotten on yit. It's no aesy gettin a Governmint job, I can tell dee. I'm goin into da Ceevil Service."

"Whan?"

"Whin I'm owld anoff. Aa at my faider hes ta du is juist ta say at he wants me ta get da job."

Willie said no more, but the whole matter lay in his mind, and he decided that he would make further enquiries regarding these Government jobs.

"Noo, Arty, boy, I hae ta go an see da minister about dis consort. Nae doot he'll be white

willin ta tae it, but he most be towld aboot da thing, ta lat da folk kën."

"I think the suggestion most excellent, Mr Laurenson," said the minister. "It is very good indeed of the Peat Commission to give a concert, which I know the people will appreciate very highly. The concert itself I have no doubt will be most enjoyable, and the object for which it is given is the very best."

"Dey spak o six o'clock, sir, bit I tink you'll better mak it seeven. Dey don't kno, dis folk at flies aboot in motors laek birds, at folk hae lang rods ta traivel on dir fit, an afore da wurd gets roond, da folk 'ill need aa dir time ta be at da kirk even at seeven."

"That's quite true. Seven will be much more suitable for people living at a distance. I will make the intimation, you mav be sure."

Some time before the hour, a considerable number of people had gathered about the church door, and five minutes before the bell stopped, the building was fairly well filled. Just before the last "chap" of the bell, a large party entered. This was the members of the Peat Commission, who filled three seats at the back of the Church, and whose presence excited the lively interest of the congregation. The women noted all the good and doubtful points of the Tittie and the high-heeler in a very brief space of time, and made mental notes of their dress; the young men voted that the former was a "fine-lookin bit o a lass"; the elders, and in fact the whole congregation, were struck by the fact that this august Govern-

ment body looked very much like other people, even on a Sunday. There was very little display about them.

"Sees du Mary Laurenson. Shu's gotten a penk ipun her noo," whispered Willa Twatt to Leezie Denelson, before the service began, "at's nedder moadrat or aesy."

"Yae. Yon's a boanie hat, though, shu's gottn."

"Yon ! Lass, is due tint dee wit ? A great flach o a thing laek a ten-year-owld kishie. In-ta da whire, tu. Eh-em ! Yae, yae. Da stink-in pride at's ipu dat ! Sees du wir wrislet watch, nae less. Pits da back o da haand oot sae at da folk can see it. Oh dat, dat. An dan wir bloose, half open, harly daecent. Yon wid du fine fir kerryin muck ipun."

"Lass, hadde tongue. Mary wis i da whire twa mont ago, an why soodna da bit o lass get a hat and bloose as weel as anidder. Shu's a boanie ting o lass."

"Boanie ! Umph ! If dir onv beauty aboot hir shu kens it ower weel. An sees du da faider. A new jacket, tu, an a collar an a tie at could du da laird. What tinks du is Betty gotten amung aa dis ?"

"Betty ? Heth, I hear at Betty is gotten a pearl broch, forby loks a new claes, an a bonnet, an—what tinks du ?—a pair o twinty-five shillin stays !"

"Lass, howld de tongue. Don't tell me dat. I'll not believe it."

"So I'm towld. Betty wis alwis a moadrat

body, an a guid neebir, an I'm shure if shu's gotten onything, shu'll no stick it i da face o da public."

"Weel, dey'll be nae haddin ipu dem noo at Jirry is wan o dis Paet Commission, wi da pey at dey get. What knos he aboot paets more as ony idder body? Heth, if dey want ta kno aboot paets, lat dem com ta me. I'm yarkid anof i dem aa mi life."

"Let us praise God by singing the forty-sixth Psalm," came in clear tones from the pulpit. "Tune, 'Stroudwater.'"

The tune was played over, all the verses were read by the minister with impressive dignity, and the congregation rose up to join in the singing. The choir consisted of four young girls and three of doubtful age, two middle-aged tenors, and four old and oldish basses, among whom were the P. M. and another man about his own age, evidently, like himself, an elder.

"God is our refuge and our strength,  
In straits a present aid;  
Therefore, although the earth remove,  
We will not be afraid."

The tune rose and fell, swelled and died away, sung from the heart by old and young alike

"Give me da forty-sixt Psalm an 'Strood-water,'" Jirry used to say when discussing congregational singing. "It's a graand Psalm an a graand tune. Man, ye can wirk wi some o dis owld Psalms an owld tunes aa your life, an you never turn tired o dem. You can't rive dem ta

bits. Dir made o too good stuff, I assure you. An dan, dir no a tune at I kno whaar da weemen hes a better shance fur da njaarm. Shu goes doon, an dan shu goes up, shu rises an shu faas. You sood a heard Betty an Lowra Maikomson climbin up ta da first high not. We used ta sit an listen, ye kno. Betty seemed ta tak her ipu da wan side an Lowra ipu da tidder, an whan at lent dey cam tagedder, man, da soond wis laek a silver trumpit. Wance dat not wis by, da men wid join in noo an agen ; an tree nots o da third line—sometimes we had twartree altas too, ye kno, bit da weemen never took ta da alta ;—dey hed less shance o da njaarm, ye kno—man, it soondid mair laek da waves o da sea as onything else. Ah, it wis fine. Dan loks o da men wid stop fur a bit an listen, ye kno, an at da last fower nots, partecularly da last wan, dey wid come in laek thunder. An dan you sood a heard da weemen i da last line. Dey wid howld on ta dat last fower nots, an wirk about dem, frae above an below an fae both sides, till ye thought dey wir never goin ta come till a end. No, no ; if ye want richt kirk singin, gie me ‘ Stroodwater ’ an da rael owld njaarm.”



## CHAPTER XXXII.

The P. M. Explains how he came to made an Elder.

THE service proceeded in the usual fashion. The second singing was a hymn, regarding which in a general way the P. M. had rather a poor opinion.

"Some o dis hymes is no sae bad, ye kno, bit a lok o dem is no muckle wirt, I assure you. No, no; give me da Psalms o Daavid, or da best o da Paraphrases. Daavid kent what did world wis, puir sowl, dat did he, in more wyas as wan; an he hed da vynd o pittin doon what he hed ta say an hoo he felt in what ypu wid caa a richt, natril wye. Yea, yea, Daavid guid troo da mill, dat did he."

For the first reading the preacher chose the second chapter of Amos. Jerry noticed with some amusement, not unmixed with sorrow, the fact that throughout the congregation, especially among the younger members thereof, and practically the whole of the Peat Commissioners, that there seemed to be a great difficulty experienced in finding the chapter.

"He's away amung da peerie prophets again, I see. Dir not da warst, though, at aall. He hes a graet laekin fur dem, dis minister o wirs.

Bit raelly, locks o dis young folk, an ower mony o da owld eens too, don't kno, no, dey don't, da differ atween a peerie prophet an a big prophet, or, as da ministers caa dem, da minor an da major prophets. (I could never understand dat 'major,' though. I aye toucht at major wis a airmy kind o body. Bit dey hae wheer wy'es, dis ministers, o spaekin aboot some things.) Dey don't even ken whaar ta fin dem. Nae windir da world is goin ta wreck, whin da folk don't kno whaar ta fin da books i da Bible, far less ta read her. Willa Twatt fan da place aesy anof, though, I noticed. Oh yiss, Willa knos her Bible; dat shu does. Whidder shu follows her oot aatagedder is anidder matter. Bit wha does? Dat's what I wid laek ta ken. Bit as fur finin da books i da Bible; dat's a thing I could du whin I wis nine year owld, an it's never left me. Da young wis instrukid i da Bible in my days. Dey wir twa weemen an wan man in wir toon alon at could lay aff da hundred-an-nineteent Psalm oot o dir head; an as fur da books, yiss, an even da number o shapters, de could reel dem aff laek wan o'clock. Noo-a-days, I believe dir some folk at couldna even say da hunder-an-seeventeent Psalm oot o dir heads."

The finding of the chapter chosen for the New Testament Lesson gave almost as much trouble as that for the Old, for it was the second chapter of Titus.

As the minister read, the P. M. followed Paul's exhortations with evident approval, for he would every now and then shake his head, as much

as to say, "Sound doctrine; da wirts o wisdom an sense."

The Psalm before the sermon was the 122nd, to the tune "St. Paul." This was another of the Psalms and tunes beloved by the P. M. and the old people, and it was sung with real feeling and solemn dignity.

"He's shurly trying to fin oot dis day if da folk does ken onything about da Bible, at aal, dis man o wirs," muttered the P. M., after the minister had announced that the subject of his discourse would be found in Hosea, 14th chapter, and first verse—

"O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquities."

"Weel, he's taen a guid text, dats wan thing. Dir muckle need fur a text laek yon, an a discoorse ipun it, too, fur truly daa ineequities o some folk in dis world is abune aa."

"No sae bad," he muttered when the sermon was finished. "Bit he micht a geen da Germans a lock more, I tink. Dir shurly, da scunner o da whole ert, alto, of coorse, dir weeked folk i dis world as weel as dem, bit shurly non so bad."

After a short prayer the minister announced that the collection would be taken; which was a signal for the P. M. and the oldish bass sitting beside him to get up, and along with two other elders to go round the people with a long ladle-like implement, and gather their free-will offerings.

"I laek da laedel meself," the P. M. had once remarked. "It brings da folk up wi a roond turn,

as you wid say. Man, I mind i da owld days, whin da folk cam ta da kirk more, an whin da collection wis taen up at da door, at in some places da folk wid gadder roond da door, and whin it was opened dey wid rumble in ithoot pittin a hapny i da plate, ta get da best saets. Of coorse dat's what da Parish Kirk is fur, I kno, ta gie da poor da oardinances o religion fur nothin. Dat's richt anof; bit it wisna alwis da poor at grudged pittin a hapny i da plate. No, no. So dey altered ta da laedel. A kirk canna be run ithoot money mair as onything else; it can't be don. Dis Roman Catholics, ye kno, dey hae more sense in some wyes as we hev aboot da kirk, not aatagedder aboot da money, alto dey look efter dat weel tu, as aboot da folk. Dey expec every wan ta be at da kirk at laest wance a week, an da waar da man or da woman is, wheddar poor or rich, da aftener dey oucht ta go. Dat's dir idee. Weel, dir some sense inta dat. Da kirk is no so muckle fur respectable folk, laek mesell—alto of coorse respectable folk hae ta be in ta look efter da sinners—as fur da weekid, an dem at's steepid in ineequity, ta mak dem better. Dat's what da kirk is fur. Bit noo, heth, it's da weekid at stays away an da daecint folk at go—dem at don't rewhire it, as ye wid say. Noo, if I hed my wye, I wid mak every wan at wis able ta craal go ta da kirk at laest wance i da week. Dan dem at da Bible caas righteous, da sicht o da sinners wid lat dem see what dey nicht come till; an da sinners demsells could see, bi lookin on an behouldin da righteous, what dey nicht come till bi da pooer o grace, an repentance.

No, no; da mīnisters noo-a-days don't, no, dey don't, yok a hadd o da folk an haul dem ta da kirk fur dir guid. It's a great mistak."

After the collection had been taken and the ladles deposited on a table before the pulpit, the minister made the intimations. The first was a proclamation of the banns of marriage between Osla Adamson and John Anthony.

"Shu's gotten a howld o him at last," whispered Willa Twatt to her friend, Leezie Renelson.

"Yae, so it seems."

"Heth, shu's vargid lang anof efter him, I kno. He's a blissin ta get."

"Joanie is no a bad sort o a sowl," said Leezie.

"Joanie Antony! A lazy, useless, ill-triven, ill-vyndid.

"Lass, wheest. Da minister is spaekin."

The minister was saying that he had very great pleasure in intimating that several of the members of His Majesty's Peat Commission, who, they were all aware, were staying in their midst, and who, he was glad to see were worshipping with them to-day, had most kindly undertaken to give a sacred concert in the Church. The concert, or praise service—for the congregation would also take part in it—would be given for the benefit of the Red Cross Society, whose claims upon their generosity he had no need to enlarge upon. They all knew the noble, self-sacrificing work of that Society. Without funds, however, it could not continue to carry on its beneficent work; and he had no doubt whatever that the concert, which

began at seven o'clock, would be attended by a large number of people, as well for the musical treat it would undoubtedly afford as for the object for which it was given. A silver collection would be taken.

During this intimation the eyes of a large number of the congregation were turned in the direction of the Peat Commission, who bore the scrutiny well, the imp affecting an air of complete indifference by fixing his eye on a knot in the roof.

The minister also announced that the Peat Commission would hold a sitting in the Church on Tuesday first, at 11 o'clock.

The singing of the 2nd Paraphrase, the pronouncing of the benediction, and the singing of the National Anthem, brought the service to a close.

As the P. M. emerged from the church a little later than the others, he found the Tittie and the majority of the Commission waiting to speak to him.

"You looked well up in the choir," said the Tittie. "And as for your voice, it could be heard over all the church."

"Oh, da voice is no sae bad yet, alto he's tree times as owld as you, my jewel. I toucht I heard you too, noo an dan. What toucht you o da sermon?"

"Very good; very good indeed. But I am more interested just now in your better half. What's Mrs Laurenson going to do? Is she going to sing to-night?"

"Weel, do you know I'm not aff tinkin at



Betty will sing—alang wi me, of coorse. Bit ye never kno. No man can faddom dis weemen. Bit I left Betty ipu da lude at shu nicht sing if da minister toucht at shu should. Of course it's his strong opinion at shu should, for I pat it till him."

"That will simply be splendid. I particularly wish to hear Betty sing, and we have all counted upon her doing so. But tell me, how far is it to your home from here?"

"Oh, a maitter o six mile."

"Six miles! Do you mean to tell me that you and Mary and Joanie have to walk six miles home, then walk another six miles back, and home again."

"Weel, what can we du? We can't fly. We're not birds."

"That's perfectly ridiculous, utterly absurd. In fact, it's not going to be allowed, when there are motors here at our disposal doing nothing."

"Weel, bit, ye see, takin folk ta da Hoose o da Loard is harly da wark o a Peat Commission."

"Fiddlesticks! As if anyone would either know or enquire. Besides, the Government is most anxious about the moral character of their employees, and consider attendance at church almost obligatory. Why, the soldiers and sailors have to attend church of some kind whenever they can."

"Weel, dat is true."

"No, I'll tell you what we'll do. You and the bairns come to the hotel and have dinner with us; then we'll take a couple of motors and run across and take Betty back with us in time for a cup of tea before the service."



"Dat wid be fine. Bit Betty is lookin fur wis ta be hom fur wir denner."

"When would you be home?"

"In a maitter o twa hoors."

"You can have dinner with us and be home within that time, easily, when you have a motor taking you. Come along."

"Weel, I'm willin anof fur meself, an da bairns. Da trouble at I see ahead is Betty an da motor. Shu's vooed ower an ower again at not wan fit o her wid ever stramp inta wan o dem."

"Oh, we've heard that before. Leave you Betty to me. I'll manage Betty. Once she's in she'll be all right."

"I hae no doot aboot dat. Da trouble 'ill be ta get her in. Of coorse wance shu's in, we'll aye get her oot."

"I wouldn't be so sure of that. Perhaps she'll enjoy it so much that she'll not wish to come out until she's had a long drive. But come away and have some dinner; I'm famishing."

As the party wended their way to the hotel, quite a number of people "were not free," as the P. M. would have said, of making remarks.

"Sees du wir Mary noo. Goin alang wi da leddies da sam as shu wis wan o dem. An Joanie, da bit o boy. Gotten a watch, you know, too."

"Dey'll be goin ta da hotel ta hae dir denner, nae less. Weel, weel, bairns, what is it ta be lucky. An da faider, heth he is wan o dis Commission, an gengs aboot wi dem."

"What ill trift du dey do?"

“ Oh, fur dat, He alon knos. Spends money; dat's aall at I see.”

“ Hit's a peety it couldna be spent ipun dem at needs it. Heard du o Betty's pearl broch? ”

“ Pearl broch? No I. Shu's no gotten a pearl broch, is shu? ”

“ Dat's shu, my lamb, fae Jirry. It's aesy ta be seen at he's gotten plenty o money. I hear at Betty an Jirry is gaen ta sing i da kirk at da concert da nicht.”

“ Weel, dat fur aall. I'll be dere, du may depend.”

“ An so 'ill I.”

The party that sat down to dinner, though not in such a vivacious mood as usual (it being the Sabbath Day), were nevertheless not in bad spirits. Meggie and her assistant had put their “ best fit foremost,” and had succeeded in providing a number of well-cooked appetising dishes, the discussion of which put everyone in the best of humour. This was the first occasion, too, on which the whole Commission had met for some days, and this fact added to the happy family sort of feeling that pervaded the gathering. The Chairman, now that his indisposition had worn off, was in genial mood, and inclined to poke fun at the P. M., even though it was Sunday.

“ How did they come to make you an elder of the kirk, Mr Laurensen? ” the Chairman asked, during the carving of the joint.

“ Me? Dat's juist what I said ta Betty whin I taald her at da minister hed aksed me. I said I didna ken what haim I'd dune at dey wanted ta

mak me a elder. Aa at I got fae her wis, 'A boanie elder du'll mak, I kno. Na, na; it's anof fur dee ta belang ta da kirk, as tur a elder—' Weel, ye see dat wis in a wye mi nown opeenion, an I towld her dat. I said of coorse I wisna wantin to be a elder, bit bad as I wis, I toucht I wis juist as guid as Lowrie Linklater, an I kent he wis goin ta tak it on afore next Saecramint. I tink dat sort a wye packed ipu Betty, as ye wid say, fur da nixt I heard aboot it wis on Seterday nicht, whin shu said, 'Jirry, if da minister is no toucht better o it, an akses dee again, I daarsay du can try ta be a elder fur a while, till we see hoo du does.' Of coorse I hed a idee at Betty widna laek Janey Linklater—Lowrie's wife—ta be able ta say at her man wis a elder an gude an took up da collection, an no me. So shu tocht better o it, you see, an shanged her mind a bit. Dat wis da wye. Ye micht say at it wis Betty at made me a elder. It wisna my seekin."

"Well done Betty," said the literary member. "She has perpicacity. I consider our Practical friend is the beau ideal of an elder, in outward appearance, at least, and I am sure in eyery other respect."

"There is no doubt about that whatever," said the Chairman. "And the fact that he is closely connected with the Church lends, we must remember, a dignity to the Commission and its proceedings which is of distinct value."

Dinner over, the Tittie engaged the Principal Clerk in conversation for a few minutes.

"Now, Mr Laurenson, make up your mind

to have your smoke in the motor, for we start in ten minutes. We are taking two motors. You three will go in the one, and I—and—and---ahem—

“Yon man o yours?”

“Will go in the other. I am dying to see Betty. We must get her to the church in the motor, for it is far too much to ask her to walk six miles and back. I believe your duet will be the piece of the evening.”

“I don’t kno aboot dat; bit it’s very guid o you, I’m sure, ta tak da trouble ta come ower; an I daarsay wance Betty braks da ice, as ye wid say, shu’ll tak ta da motors laek a duke ta da wattir. It’s da first step at ill be da warst. An what ir you aa singin, an what ir you singin yoursell?”

“Oh, we’re singing lots of things, and I haven’t just yet decided whether I’ll sing a solo or not. Come away. Here’s the motors. Let us waste no more time.”

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Tittle meets Betty ; and has an exciting experince with the calf.

"Dir juist wan thing I wid laek ta aks you afore we start," said the P. M.

"What's that?" asked the Tittie.

"If we owertak Ertv Maikomson an his bairns ipu da rod goin hom, du ye tink at we could manage ta gie dem a lift? I widna laek ta pass Ertv an da lasses an da boy, an go sturin by in a motor an leave him an dem trudgin ipu dir fit. I wid laek ta be neeberly, ye kno."

"I see no reason why you shouldn't."

"Da only raeson at I see against it is at you twa hae da wan motor an we tree da idder, an of coorse we couldna tak fower in very weel. Aless ye tak Mary an Joanie wi you, an da fower cam in wi me. Dey widna du ony hairm. I wid tell dem whin he made fir pittin his airm aroond your neck, ta look da idder wye, ir up i da heevens."

"Fiddle-de-dee! I would like to see a man attempting to put his arms round my neck. I keep men in their place, I assure you."

"Weel, of coorse you maybe laek better ta pit your airms roond his neck. It comes ta muckle

da sam i da end. Dat's of coorse what you took da motor fur, wisna hit?"

"Get away. Remember this is the Sabbath Day. As Betty said, a bonny elder you are."

"Bairns, dat is true. So, we'll better be goin. Whin we owertak Ertý, I'll send Mary an Joanie ta you."

About a mile and a half from the toon, Ertý and the bairns came in view.

"Dere dey ir. Dere's Ertý, trudgin away, leanin kind o heavy ipu da stick, poor sowl. He's gettin owld, ye kno, laek meself. I mind da day, though, I mind da day. Mony is da fun at Ertý an me hes hed tagedder."

The noise and horns of the motors made Ertý and Jeemy jump to one side of the road, and the two girls to the other. They were somewhat surprised when the motors slowed down and brought up near them.

"Hillo, Ertý, is dis dee?"

"Dis is me. Is dis dee, Jirry?"

"All at's o me. What wid du an da lasses say till a run hom in da motor?"

"Say? Heth, we wid say dat wid be graand. I'm kind o tired, an we're goin ta da kirk at nicht, du knos."

"Dat's juist what I wis tinkin. Weel, dan, come you aa in here. Mary an Joanie, aff ye go ta da idder motor. Da five o wis 'ill be plenty inta wan. Come up, lasses. Come ye aside me, wan at every side. An Jeemie, dee an dee faider 'ill aesy fin room ower yonder. Dere we ir noo. Noo, Maikie, as da man said, shak her up an mak

her spin. We'll no be lang in goin hom."

And home they were in "two shakes of a lamb's tail," to the great astonishment of Mrs Maikomson, who never before had seen Erty and the offspring coming home in such style, either on Sunday or Saturday.

"Na, I'll no come in. We mann get hom at wance," said the P. M. to Erty. "Bit I wis juist gaen ta say ta dee, at wan o da troubles I'll hae dis nicht 'll be ta get Betty into da motor at aall. Shu hates dem laek pushon. Dey frichten da hens, an da calf, du knos, an dan shu tinks at every wan at enters a motor alive is shure ta com oot edder dead or mangled. Bit I wis tinkin at if du could get Lowra ta enter her, seein at ye're goin ta da consort, at Betty micht go in if shu kent at Lowra wis goin."

"Heth, dir nae faer o Lowra, my Jirry. Dat's juist wan o da things at Lowra is aaber fur. Shu's said ower an ower again at if dir wis wan thing at shu wid laek more as anidder, it wis a ride in a motor afore shu gude hom. Lowra 'ill go, I assure dee, an only too gled."

"So. Dat'll pave da wye a bit. I'll tell dee what we'll du. We'll send wan o da motors ower fur Lowra an dee an da bairns at six o'clock, and dan ye'll touch alang wiroomse an tak Betty an da rest o wis on board, if Betty 'ill come. I' da meantime I'll see hoo da laand lies wi her."

"Du can depend at Lowra 'ill be dere, riggid oot ta da last ribbon."

"So. We'll be aff."

"So be wi you,"



“Wha is dis comin ta da hoose in twa o yon haethens o motors,” asked Betty of herself, as the vehicles hove in sight of her abode. “Dat’s Jirry, sure anof; an Mary an Joanie. Bit wha is dis idder twa? A boanie bit o a lass, at kerries hersell weel; an a fine-looking, weel-dressed young man. Heth, dis ’ill be twa o dis Commission. Dat’s juist laek Jirry; dat’s juist him, ta bring strange folk ta da hoose ithoot lattin a body ken aforehand. What ’ill I du fur cups? Dir juist fower i da hoose, fur wan o da hens flew up i da rack yesterday an tumbled doon an bruke da idder twa.”

“This, then, is Mrs Laurenson,” said the Tittie, who entered first, and who went up to Betty in a frank and engaging manner and took her by the hand. “This is Mary’s and Joanie’s mother, and—

“No ta mention Jirry’s wife,” broke in the P. M.

“Beggin your pardin, you hae da advantage o me,” said Betty, who was rather taken aback, but who still retained hold of the Tittie’s hand.

“Betty, du oucht ta ken ithoot bein towld. Wha else could dis be bit da Tittie, at I’m been-spaekin aboot sae muckle, wan o da leddies i da Commission at writes doon aa da whestins we aks da folk.”

“Dis is her, is it? Dear-a-dear! Yae, yae, I’m heard dee spaekin aboot her. A boanie tryst shu’ll hae amung you, I kno. An what wye are you come to wir puir abod?”

“I’ve come to see you. I’ve come to see

Betty, if you'll allow me to call you so. Our friend here, your good man, has so often referred to Betty, and what she'll do, and what she'll not do, and what her opinion is about this and that, that you seem to be known to all of us. We all know you already so well that we almost consider you one of ourselves; but I wanted to see you with my own eyes and make your personal acquaintance."

"Thank you, thank you, my dear. I'm no muckle wirt ta be seen noo; an as fur Jirry, ye needna believe aa at he says."

"He hasn't said enough, that's my opinion. He's been too modest," replied the other, who with the unfailing instinct peculiar to women saw all Betty's good points at a glance, and "took" to Jirry's better half, as Betty did to her. Betty, it may be here remarked, was a sweet-looking woman well over middle age; one who, it could be seen, had gone through many of the trials and some of the tragedies of life without having been broken by the experience, or having had her disposition hardened or her temper soured. In her face could be noted firmness as well as gentleness, and a look of quiet placidity and evenness of temper which bespoke the mind of one who has plumbed most of the depths and risen to many of the heights of human life. Simply, yet neatly dressed, her brown eyes and even, olive complexion were well set off by a spotless white mutch which she wore, and her regular, even beautiful features fully justified the remarks so frequently made by Jirry that "Betty was a fine-looking lass in her day. Dat shu wis."

"An wha may dis be?" asked Betty, referring to Mr H.

"Betty, whaar's dee wit? Can du no see wha it is? Does du tink at du's da onlv woman ipu dis ert at ever hed a lad? Da lasses mann hae dir lads yet, I assure dee."

"Take no notice of what he says. This is one of the shorthand writers."

"I heed his foally? I, I? Na, na, my jewel. I gae dat up lang ago. He micht a been your bridder, ye ken. He's very laek you."

"Noo, Betty, I tink it's time we wir gettin somethin ta aet. Da fresh air maks folk hungry, an we'll need ta look slippy, fur we hae ta be at da kirk afore seeven o'clock."

"Come ye wis ben, my jewel, an tak aff your things, an sit doon. Hit's no muckle we can offer you, edder wan wye or da idder, bit simple as it is, ye're welcome till it. Mary," Betty said a moment afterwards, as she emerged from the ben end, "get da tae-pot ready, an pit in five taespunefus o da tree-an-eightpny tae ats up yunder i da canister, an dan come an set da tae ben. Don't mask da tae mair as a whaarter o a hoor, mind dat. An da peerie nippid biscuits du'll fin in a tin i da press. An da bannicks—

"Midder, you canna set doon baremael bannicks afore da leddy?"

"Lass, wheest wi dee. I'm towld at da jantry laeks nothin better, wi fresh butter. Set doon what we hae, an set it doon richt. An boil da nine eggs du'll fin ipu da plate i da tap o da rack. Noo, dir juist wan thing at du'll need ta notice. Dir

juist fower tae cups,—fur wan o da hens bruke twa yesterday—'ill-trift sit ithin her—bit fur a mercy dir a big coffee cup. Dee faider 'ill hae ta tak her, an Joanie 'ill tak his ain peerie mug. Sae we'll manage. I'll hae ta geng ben an spaek ta da folk."

"Your good man has just been saying that you are going to help at the concert to-night."

"I wid laek ta help wi onything I can du fur wir sodgers an sailors; bit what can I du, a auld wife? Forby, Jirry is never tried ower da hyme at he wantid me ta sing wi him, an I doot if he kens da wirds, altho he kent dem wance ipun a time. Bit dat's mony a year ago."

"I have no doubt about the words. Besides, he has the book, and of course he can sing from that."

"Yiss, bit I alwis tink at wan sood hae da wirds bi hert ta du onything richt."

"Betty, I ken da wirds weel anof. An dir nothin ta hinder me ta nune dem ta mesell as we geng ta da kirk. Hes du gotten da hyme-book?"

"Dat hae I. An hoo du ye laek da country, miss?"

"Oh, I love the country, and the sheep and the lambs, and the dogs and everything. There's a dear little calf out here I must make the acquaintance of before very long. I love all young animals—

"No forgettin da men."

"Jirry, will du juist—"

"And a calf, I think, is the dearest of the whole."

"Oh, ye can aye mak up ta da calf," said Betty. "He's a kind o frisky, I can tell you, though. He's juist oot o da byre fur da first time. Noo, noo at Mary is gotten da tae ready, will ye sit in an tak a cup?"

"These bannocks and fresh butter and eggs are excellent, so nice and fresh," said the Tittie.

"Weel, my dear, it's no muckle ta what ye're used till, I ken, livin in hotels as ye ir; bit it's fresh an clean, an we can only tank Gude at we hae what we hae. Dir mony a een waar aff is dis weary world, I ken."

"Yiss," said the P. M., "dat's wan thing at can be said aboot da country. If a body wirks, dey can alwis get somethin ta aet, edder bi sea or laand. Ye can get fish, an tatties, an mael, an butter, an eggs, an milk, an meat, forby oo fur claes o wan kind an anidder, an rivlins fur your feet, an locks o things. Bit, man, da varg aboot it is aafil."

"Well, but," said Mr H., "you can't expect to get all these essentials without doing something for them."

"No, we don't expect it, an heth, we don't get it. Noo at we're hed wir tae, I'll hae a look ower da hyme at we're ta sing as lang as I'm takin a smok."

"And I'll go and see what the calf is thinking about all these things," said the Tittie.

Joanie had informed Mr H. that he had a tame scorrie and a tame scarf, besides a white rabbit, and they of course had to be examined and admired.

"Noo, Betty," said Jerry, "we hae twartree meenits to wirsells afore we set oot, an we can rin da hyme ower, bit I don't tink dir ony need fur it. Bit I wis juist goin ta say at dis young leddy cam ower ta see dee, as shu says, bit shu cam fur some-thin more. Shu cam wi da motor specially ta bring dee back in her, an ta pit dee hom again, fur shu said at shu couldna tink ta lat dee waalk aa da wye."

"Dat's very kind o her, I'm sure. Shu's a nice bit o a lass, an I laek her weel. Bit, Jirry, du knos weel anof at I couldna pit my fit inta wan o yon things. It micht be mi death."

"Weel, I don't kno. Juist as du laeks. Lowra Maikomson an da hael faimly is gaen back in dem, an I don't see what's ta stop dee. If du's no goin i da motor, we'll need ta mak a start in twartree meenits. He's a braw bit o traevil ta da kirk."

"Nane kens dat better as I. Mony a trail I'm hed till her. I kno no. Lowra Maikomson. Hoo is Lowra Maiksomson gaen i da motor? What's shu got ta du wi it?"

"Weel, it's juist dis wye. Dir plenty o room, an da motors is goin back, an I asked Ertý an da faimly ta come."

"Dat's juist laek dee. Dir gotten nothin ta du wi da Commission, or da consort eddern."

"Dey don't, I kno. Bit baith Ertý an Lowra said dey wid laek ta hear wis singin, an meent ta geng ta da kirk, an I couldna be sae unneeberly as no ta aks dem i da motor whin dey wir plenty o room. Noo, I don't see, if Lowra comes, an her



lasses, forby dis young led dy, da Tittie,—

“Merciful Fadir! Merciful wan! Jirry! Jirry!”

“Loard’s sake, woman, what’s wrang?”

“Oh, oh!”

“Betty, what’s wrang wi dee? What sees du?”

“Oh, da calf is set aff wi da bit o lass! Oh, dear Fader! He’s rinnin doon ower da banks wi her somewye or idder wuppid i da tedder. Jirry, fly, fly! fur gudesake. Shu’ll be ower da banks. Oh! oh! Jirry, get da dug an roond up da calf bluidspring. Shu’ll be a corpse. Oh, for my hert!”

As soon as Jerry realised what wis happening, he made a bolt for the door and whistled for the dog. The dog, however, was far away, intent on business of his own in the hill among the sheep, contrary to orders. Even in the excitement of the moment, Jirry had time to mutter to himself—“It’s funny, min, at dogs, laek locks o folk, is always away whin dir maist wantid.” His muttering, however, did not delay in any way the serious work he had in hand. He called on Joanie and Mr H., who both came out of the little out-house in haste to ascertain what was wrong.

“Fur mercy sake, man, fly doon yon wye an get atween da calf an da edge o da banks. He’s draggin da Tittie till her death, if we dunna get dere in time. Joanie, come wi me. Run, man, run, laek da Evil Wan. Mary, come wi Joanie an me, bit tak care o desell, at du doesna geng ower da banks. What a misantir.”



The cause of the "misanthir" was of course the calf, and the Tittie's ignorance of calves' ways. She had gone up to the "dear," as she called him, who, however, seemed to have doubts of her intentions, for he jumped and frisked about in rather an alarming manner; at one moment letting her almost touch him, the next violently jumping away, kicking up his heels, and then suddenly standing still and gazing at her. It was one of these violent jumps that brought matters to a crisis. The calf pulled the stake that held him, and finding himself so far free—(the Tittie held the tether in her hands)—he gave a glorious kick, put down his head, and made off. His admirer then lost her head, and felt she must hold on to the tether as a matter of honour, for she was to blame for the calf getting loose; and as the animal dragged her, the tether and stake got "wuppid" round one of her ankles. She could not get the noose unloosed, for when she bent down to make the attempt she was brought bodily to the ground and dragged along in a manner that was both uncomfortable and alarming. It was only during the brief intervals when my lord paused and had a look round to see how affairs were getting on that she could recover her upright position, to be immediately brought to earth again as another joyous run was made by her captor. To her horror she saw that he was making steadily, if some circuitously and obliquely, for the cliffs. Her loud cries which now rent the air were answered by Jerry's reassuring voice, who told her to "howld on, howld on; pu back, pu ipo da tedder as hard as ye can."

"Noo, Mr H., go ta yon side an get atween da calf an yon gio, fur Loard's sake. Mary, dee an Joanie go doon an keep up if he comes yon wye. I ken what ta du," said Jerry.

"Noo, mi boy, I hae dee, lipper at du is," he hissed. "Du's nearly played a boanie prank dis day. Noo, folk," he roared, "come an get dis tedder free o da Tittie, an help her up. I'll tak da calf. I hae him. Ir ye hurtid muckle, my jewel?"

"Not so very much, after all; but I do feel stiff and shaken all over. Oh dear! I was terrified. What an awful experience!"

"Noo, dunna ye sit doon an dwaam away. Here, Joanie, dee an Mary help her ta get hom. Dis is no a very gude preparation fur da consort, I most say."

"It is not. Oh dear, dear!"

"Calfs is wheer things, my dear, I assure you. Dir waar as da men."

"To think that that innocent-looking animal would do such a thing."

"Weel, of coorse da baest didna ken at he wis duin ony hairm; an he juist wantid ta be free an hae a bit o fun. Dir nothin winderfil in dat. Dat's juist what baid men an weemen laek ta du. So we canna wyte da bit o calf."

"I suppose not; but really—"

"Oh, my dear, my jewel at you ir," ejaculated Betty, in tones of deep concern, as the party entered the house. "Oh, at sic a thing sood a happened whin ye wir at my hoose. Ir you hurtid yoursell? Oh, dat venom o a calf! I kent da day he wis calved he wid play some plunkey."

"No, I'm not hurt, I must say, thank you. My ankle is a little bit sore, and I do feel shaken. But a rest will put me all right, I think."

"Yiss, dat's what's wantid," put in Jirry. "I'm fixed mi lad at he'll no draw his stake in a hurry again, I kno. Noo, I wid laeve da twa folk ta demsells till we set oot ta da kirk; an Betty, dee an Mary 'ill better geng an get ready. Ye hae twartree things ta pit on, an dat taks time."

"So, so, as lang as da dear bairn is no hurtid, I'se du onything. Dear-a-dear! What a world!"

"It's noo aboot five," said Jirry to himself. "I'll hae a smok as lang as Betty an Mary is gettin ready, an at da sam time hae a look ower da hyme. Dey'll tak da hoor, every meenit, afore dir aa riggid oot. Betty 'ill hae on da new broch, nae doot, forby her idder new fixins. Weel, dat's what dey wir gotten fur. Betty wis never wan o da kind at made much blow; I'll say dat. Dan da motor hes ta geng ower fur Erty an Lowra an da faimly an be back here aboot six. So, bairns, a hoor's paece is a mercy in dis world. It's not mony I'm hed in my pilgrimage."

Jirry was somewhat rudely awakened out of a snooze into which he had fallen by the brusque entry of Erty and the family. Erty found his old chum sitting with his head to one side, fast asleep, his pipe lying on the lapel of his jacket, and the hymn-book on the floor.

"Hillo, Jirry, is dis da wye at du maks ready fur a consort i da Loard's Hoose?"

"Boy, is dis dee? I'm juist dwaamed ower fur twartree meenits."

"Whaar's Betty," asked Lowra.

"Betty? I couldna tell dee. Bit I tak shu's i da peerie room atween da twa ends pittin da feenishin touches till her claes. Heth, shu's been at it fur a hoor."

"A hoor? Yae, dat's aa at du kens. I hae mair ta du as dress mesell, I can tell dee," said Betty, who entered the room. "So Lowra, ye're come, and ye're comin ta da kirk."

"Yae, dat we ir, I assure dee. It's no every day at dee an Jirry sings i da kirk, an it's no every day at I get a shance o a rin in a motor."

"Oh, fur dis motors. I hae nae faith in dem at aal. Bit I suppose since ye're aa gaen I'll hae ta geng tu."

"Weel, du canna walk noo, dat's wan thing, an be in time," said her lord and master. "Noo, we'll hae to look slippy, I assure you. Mary, geng an tell yon twa folk at we're aa ready. Da thing starts at seeven o'clock, an we need aa wir time."

After a good deal of squeezing, the eleven got packed into the two motors, and a start was made for the church.

"Betty, is du gotten da hyme-book?"

"What's da need o dee aksin sic a whestin? Yae, dat hae I. Noo, geng slow, geng slow. Whatever ye du, geng slow, an dunna hae wis aa killed. Fur sic a hearin. Me, Betty Laurenson, drivin in a motor on da Sabbath Day."

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### **The Sacred Concert comes off.**

THE two motors reached the church without mishap, greatly to Betty's relief and surprise. Although they went at the rate of about 15 miles an hour, she felt the speed if anything slow, and indeed would have had no objection to a considerable acceleration of their progress. In fact, when the church was reached, she made the remark that "it wis harly wirt gettin' in, a body wis sae shune oot."

"So," said Jerry, "since du's oot safe, I suppose dat's da main thing. I daarsay dey'll be nae haadin o dee efter dis. Du'll be wantin a motor ta deesell, ta rin aboot da croft in."

The time was now a quarter to seven, and although the church was fairly well filled, a large number of people were waiting outside. They wanted to see the "quality" arrive, take mental note of their ways, and have an opportunity of voicing their opinions to each other. Two "old-young" women were particularly interested in the proceedings, and voiced their opinions thus—

"Heth, da first o wir 'whality' is nae idder as Jirry an Betty, what tinks du. An wha is yon? Bairns, don't tell me at yon's Ertly Maikomson an

Lowra. Betty is a kind o moadrat body; bit Lowra! Tak du my wird fur it, my lamb, every time du meets Lowra efter dis, dey'll be a knappin ipun hir, an a taakin aboot da motir run, ye kno, at 'ill be nedder moadrat or aesy. Sees du Ertly haandin her oot laek a leddy! Comes doon wi da air o a wheen. Bairns, what ir we comin till? Betty got oot hersell, poor sowl. Jirry wis staandin lookin da idder wye. Sees du Betty's new bonnet? An wir new tippet. Heth, yon's cost some money. Silk, if it's no saetin; an black beads, ye kno, an aa da rest o it. An sees du, see du, dere's da pearl broch. An yon's a new goon, as I'm leevin. Betty never hed a goon laek yon in her life afore. Made in Lerrick, nae doot, bi da best dressmaakers. Bairns, what is it no ta hae money. Raelly, if Jirry is no faen ipun his feet, I'm a leer. An da faimily, see you. Mary dressed up laek a duchess, an Joanie wi a new strood and a new watch and chain, an latten you kno it too, I assure you."

"Weel," replied the other, "I dunna grudge onything ta Jirry; he's a daecint anof sowl, an so is Betty. Da bairns is bit bairns. Bit what's dis Maiksomsons got ta du wi it? Dat's what I wid laek ta ken."

"I kno no. Bit I kno dis. If Lowra wance gets her finger i da pie, shu'll howld goin, shu'll howld goin. Lowra wid set up a stoor at wid chok da perish. Tinks du, I tink we'll better geng up an spaek ta Betty, afore we geng in. We hae nae ill-will at Betty, alto shu's gotten a coarn o money."

Inspired by the noble principle that it is always wise ta keep on good terms with those in possession of the mammon of unrighteousness, the two went up and shook hands with Betty, the family, and Jerry in the most cordial fashion, having, however, no more than a passing word for Lowra and Erty Maikomson, who, with their familv, clung to the P. M. and his family like limpets.

"Oh, Mrs Laurenson, I'm sure an certain at da most o da folk at's here,—an dir some o dem traivilled six mile o gait—is come ta hear you and your gudeman singin," one said, at the same time taking in evry "stick" that Betty wore, down to her boot-laces.

"Na, na, my bairn, dat's no laekly. Dir come ta hear aa dis graand folk, folk at can baid sing an play wi sense, no laek da laek o me. What signifies aa at I can du, a owld woman laek me?"

"It's da voice, Mrs Lawrenson, it's da voice. I'm heard my midder sayin at ta hear you an Tirry singin wis laek bein up in heeven. Dis folk can maybe sing in a wye, an play tu; bit du dey hae da voice? I doot it; I doot it. Heth, here day come. Dir a baand o dem. Dir no aa gaein ta sing ir dey?"

"I dunna ken."

"Dere da minister meetin dem. Clemie, we'll better geng in an fin a saet. I want ta hear every wird o it."

The advent of the members of the Peat Commission, including of course the imp, who instantly made up to Joanie and asked him the time, was the signal for those who were outside to enter the



church, which was now filled by an audience agog with pleasureable anticipations, not unmixed with a feeling at the back of their minds that they would not take everything on trust, but would bring into play the critical faculties of which they were possessed. They noticed that only four went up to the choir. Jerry, Betty. and, they observed with many nudges and whisperings. Mary, went up the aisle and sat in a seat immediately in front of the choir.

"Why didna dey tak Joanie tu, I winder," asked Liza of her friend Clemie. "Dan da hale faimly wid a been in it. Mary 'ill be houldin furt as weel as da faider an midder."

"Weel, lass, shu hes ta du somethin. Shu's on da rod noo, du sees, ta be wan o da jantry."

"Fur wir jantry. Fur dat, fur dat. Aa at shu wants is ta lat da folk see at shu's gotten a new bloose an a new hat. Bit my Clemie at du is, 'pride goeth afore a faal, an a haughty speerit—' "

"Lass, wheest wi dee. Da minister is spaekin."

A few minutes before the others came in, the high-heeler had entered, and going up to the instrument, had opened and sat down at it with a business-like air. Opening a book, she played for some time, and, as Jerry remarked afterwards, "tuned her up no sae bad. Bit, man, wi dis harmonicons an some o dis organs, dir no laek da fiddle, ye kno, ye can hear da thing comin inta tune, an alto you canna play yoursell, ye kno whin shu's richt. Bit wi dis harmonicons, as I say, dey wirk away at it, bit dey seem ta be as far aff whin

dir don as whin dey began. Dat dey will not."

"But Miss G. wasn't tuning the instrument. She was playing a classical piece, as an opening voluntary," said the party to whom these remarks were addressed.

"Oh, shu wis, wis shu? I see, I see. Weel, I don kno. Da warst o some o what ye caa classical pieces is dey nedder seem ta hae beginnin, middle. or end. Dat's da warst. Fur my pairt, I laek a tune, somethin' a body can follow."

The minister intimated that the service would begin by the singing of the hundredth Psalm. This was a Psalm and tune in which all could and did join heartily in, and after a brief prayer, the clergyman said he was very glad to see such a large congregation present. From the programme which had just been put into his hands, he had no doubt the service would be one which would long rest in their memories, for the talented ladies and gentlemen who had so generously come forward were to perform some of the best music ever written. He was glad to say also that local talent would not be unrepresented. They had with them to-night their esteemed elder, Mr Jeremiah Laursen and his good wife, who in the days when most of those present were children, used to delight congregations in this church and throughout the parish by their beautiful singing. Their daughter, too, who had inherited her parents' love of music and their skill in its performance, had also kindly consented to assist ("hears do yon," said Clemie). He therefore had every confidence in looking forward to a rare musical treat—a treat

which would combine the ancient and the modern, the classical and that more easily understood of the people, performed by trained musicians and by those who had not been so fortunate. He had much pleasure in calling on Mr H., who would sing the recitative and solo from the oratorio "Elijah," "If with all your hearts ye truly seek Me."

Mr H. stood up, and after Miss G. had struck a chord, began—"Ye people, rend your hearts; rend your hearts, and not your garments," and so on, to the end of the recitative.

"I don kno aboot yon," remarked Ertty Maik-omson for himself. "Dir no muckle tune yunder. Da chap's voice is no sae bad; bit Jirry in 'Dir's a Laand,' is mair ta my laekin. Bit heth he's no don yit. He's beginnin again."

"Dat's better. Dir is a kind o form o a tune yunder, I will say. Bit, min, da wirds is aa da sam ower again, maistly. Hit's a peety he couldna hae twartree verses till it. He goes very heich though. Most be a aafil strain, yon, bi da look o him. No sae bad; no sae bad at aall."—which opinion might be taken as that generally prevailing.

"After that impassioned solo, so beautifully rendered, we are to be favoured with a quartette by Miss F., Miss G., Mr I., and Mr D. The name of the piece is 'Jesu, Son of God Incarnate,' by Gounod."

Madam took the treble, the Tittie the alto, Mr I. the tenor, and Mr D. the bass, the accompanist being Mr H. Miss G.'s voice, which was of the

thin, hard, and shrill variety, did not blend with the Tittie's, which was soft and mellow; and Mr I.'s, being weak, was no match for Mr D.'s robust bass. The ensemble could hardly be said, therefore, to be satisfactory, for none of the voices blended, a sine qua non in quartette singing. To put it in plain language, Gounod's beautiful setting of the Ave Verum, which demands the most delicate handling and voices absolutely balanced both in tone and power, was a failure—a fact which the audience felt but could hardly explain.

"Weel," said Ertý again to himself, "if yon's what dey caa da trained voice, gie me her juist as da Loard made her. Yon's no fur me. No, no; yon's a wheer thing, min. I winder whin Jerry and Betty is goin ta mak fur it."

"The next item is the bass solo, 'Honour and Arms,' from the oratorio 'Samson,' which Mr D. will sing."

"Jirry," whispered Betty, in the middle of the long introduction to the solo, "tinks du is yon saecrid music?"

"I don kno. Shurly it is. Da minister widna lat dem sing it if it wisna."

Betty, and indeed almost the whole of the congregation, were startled and somewhat shocked to hear Mr D., who was in his element in this typical Handelian solo, burst forth in full voice, and with evident enjoyment—

"Honour and a-a-a-a-a-a-rms,  
Scorn such a foe,

Scorn su - - - ch a foe.

Though I could end thee at a blow,

Though I could end thee at a blow,

Poor victory to conquer thee,

Poor victory to conquer thee.

Or gl-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-ry,

Or glory, or glory;

In thy overthrow.

Or gl-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-ry

In thy o——ver throw.

Vanquish a slave that is half slain?

So mean a conquest I disdain.

So me--e-an a conquest,

So me-e-an a conquest

I disdain. I disdain.

I dis-da-a-a-a-a-in.

So me-e-an a conquest

I ————— disdain."

This having been performed with great precision, or, as someone once remarked, "knocked off in quite a nobby way," the first part was repeated, and Miss G. and Mr D. brought up on the last chord without a "chink of daylight between them." As a piece of technical execution the performance was masterly, and it was evident that the performers felt they had done both the florid and difficult solo and themselves full justice.

"Weel, boys, I don kno, I'm sure. Shu's lively. You can't deny shu's lively. Shu's more laek a jig as onything else. Bit I don't kno aboot yon i da Hoose o da Loard. It appears ta me ta be more laek a thing fur da theaater, or a haal. An why da man couldna say 'Glory' and be don

wi it, I don kno. I suppose he hed ta spin her oot some wye or idder."

"We are now to be favoured with the beautiful solo, 'O Rest in the Lord,' by Miss F."

The Tittie's singing of this well-known classic was the first thing that really touched the hearts of the people. She sang the solo with that quiet, earnest prayerfulness which it demands, every word being clearly enunciated, and the melody excellently phrased and executed without straining after effect. Miss G.'s accompaniment was sympathetic, and just formed that support which the voice needed.

"Noo, dat is somethin, I will say," said Ertý "trained or no trained. Yon's a boanie thing, an a boanie bit o lass;" while Betty gave the singer a look which plainly said she would like to take and fold her in her arms.

After an instrumental solo by Miss G., during which the collection was taken, Miss Mary was called upon.

Mary knew her limitations, and she knew her audience. She therefore did not attempt anything that demanded great powers of vocalization. She chose the hymn "Lead, Kindly Light." As the words of the beautiful hymn, wedded to the no less beautiful tune, were sung in a simple manner, straight from the heart, and with an expressiveness which a little nervousness only accentuated, the feelings of the congregation were clearly touched; and as the last words,

"And with the morn those angel faces smile  
Which I have loved long since and lost awhile,"



fell from the singer's lips, many heads were bowed to hide the tears that could not be kept back.

A duet "Love Divine," performed by Miss G. and Mr H. with considerable taste and finish, followed, and, in the phraseology of the newspaper reports, was highly appreciated. Mr D. then rendered Gounod's ever-fresh "Nazareth," another number which went straight to the hearts of the people, and which Mr D. sang with fine taste and expressiveness. His singing of the last verse was particularly fine, and the accompaniment a delight.

To the introduction to "Ev'ry Valley shall be exalted" ("Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people,") which Mr H. next essayed, the congregation listen with bated breath and with the keenest enjoyment; but as regards the solo itself, a number of them were not altogether sure what to do—whether to laugh or to be grave, for the long "runs" struck them as being if anything comical. The singer, however, whose vocal abilities were above the usual amateur standard, surmounted the difficulties of the piece in a masterly manner, and brought the aria to a triumphant and impressive conclusion. The crooked was to be made straight, and the rough places plain. Everyone felt the power and majesty of the prophet's words, as well as the genius of the man who wedded his prophecy to immortal music. In this solo, as in all the others, Miss G. displayed abilities as a performer of the first order.

"I have now much pleasure in calling upon our old friends, Mr and Mrs Laurenson, to sing



as a duet the hymn, 'There's a Land that is Fairer than Day,' which, I may add, is the last item on the programme."

This intimation created more general interest than all the others put together. Every eye was turned on the worthy couple, both of whom felt unaccountably excited and solemn. They rose quietly and reverently, and went up and stood before the instrument, and after a minute's pause, Betty began. Rather timidly at first, and as if she did not feel sure of herself, the tune, although clear, was wafted on the air in rather tremulous tones; but when the third line was reached, it was felt by those who knew her "in her prime," that she would soon come back to her own. There was a difference, however, they felt—a difference indefinable yet none the less real. Betty was now singing with the experience of a life, and all that that meant, behind her. Her voice, sweet and clear as a bell, a little tremulous, and with just a hint of the "njaarm" in it, was one that gripped the heart-strings and brought tears to the eyes. Without accompaniment, without even the key being given, she sang the first verse alone, Jirry standing by her side—

"There's a land that is fairer than day,  
And by faith we can see it afar;  
For the Father waits over the way,  
To prepare us a dwelling-place there."

In the refrain her man joined. After Betty's "In the sweet," he came in with the words "By and

bye," repeated until both joined together on the words "We shall meet on that beautiful shore."

Jerry, in rather a diffident sort of way, for he felt his voice was not so good as it once was, sang the second verse—

"We shall sing on that beautiful shore  
The melodious song of the blest;  
And our spirits shall sorrow no more—  
Not a sigh for the blessing of rest."

the refrain again being given. The third and last verse was sung by Betty with great feeling—

"To our bountiful Father above  
We will offer the tribute of praise,  
For the glorious gifts of His love,  
And the blessings that hallow our days."

Jerry on this occasion joining in in the third line. In the refrain, however, Betty's voice seemed to get fainter and weaker. She was clearly feeling the strain; her feelings were overcoming her. But she held bravely on to the end; and as the last long-drawn notes, full of pent-up emotion, died away almost in a whisper, her husband instinctively softening his voice as he felt her's weakening, the women wept unrestrainedly; the men held down their heads to hide their emotion; the children looked from one to another in an effort to understand the meaning of it all.

"Let us pray," the minister said.

"We will close this service by singing the

hymn 'For ever with the Lord,' but before doing so I wish first to thank those who have helped on this most memorable occasion ; and secondly to announce that the collection amounts to the handsome sum of fifteen pounds, six shillings, and sevenpence, which sum will be forwarded to the Red Cross Society.

"For ever with the Lord,  
 Amen, so let it be ;  
 Life from the dead is in that word :  
 'Tis immortality."

The fine old hymn was taken up by a hundred voices and sung with a new feeling. Although some of the voices were rough, unpolished, a bit out of tune, with unmistakeable evidences of the "njaarm" among the older trebles, and with bursts of improvised bass among the men, the heart and spirit were right ; and the benediction, followed by the National Anthem, closed a service which everyone said was worth walking ten miles to be present at.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

**Betty and her family go to the hotel; Lowra and her's have to walk home, regarding which proceedings Lowra has something to say.**

“THERE'S one thing you have to do, Mrs Laurensen, without a shadow of a doubt,” said the Tittie to Betty outside the church door. “You and your goodman and the bairns have to come to the hotel and have a cup of tea and a bit of supper to refresh you before you go home.”

“My jewel at you ir, I couldna come afore aa da graand folk an sit doon wi dem. Dat's no fur da laek o me. I nicht tak a air o tae i da kitchen wi Meggie, fur I ken her weel anof. Bit as fur sittin doo wi—”

“Stuff and nonsense. Here's the Chairman. Let me see if he can persuade you. Mrs Laurensen says she will only come to the hotel for a cup of tea if she goes to the kitchen. She's not good enough, she says, for the like of us.”

“Well, I like that, I must say. No, indeed, we will only be too glad to have you with us for an hour or two, to make the acquaintance of our Practical Member's wife,—Betty, if I may take the liberty of calling you so. You are already so well known to us all by report, and so delightfully made one of ourselves, I may say, to-night, that to let you go home without meeting us all at the

hotel would be unpardonable. One who can sing like you, with such feeling and natural taste, the possessor of such a beautiful voice, is company for the greatest in the land. Kitchen ! I should like to see you shunted into the kitchen ! The parlour is a more suitable place, I should say, waited upon and honoured by all. Here's Mr E. Mr E., this is Mrs Laurenson, our P. M.'s better half."

" His better half ! More than that, I should say. Mrs Laurenson, your singing to-night has awakened chords in my heart which I imagined had been laid to rest for ever. You are coming to the hotel, surely, to let us hear some more of these delightful old hymns, and to make our further acquaintance."

" She protests she's not fit company for us."

" Not fit company for us ? For us ? A mediocre Government Commission ! It's all the other way about, I assure you. But, my dear sir, as you know, true greatness is ever modest, ever retiring. We really must have the great plasure of a little of your company to-night, Mrs Laurenson, if you will be so good. You are tired, and need a refreshing cup of tea. Allow me to offer you my arm to assist you to the hotel," and putting Betty's arm in his, the four set off.

" Heth, Betty, is nae smaa drink noo, I assure you," said the P. M. to himself. " Howldin ita da airm o da leetry man, nae less, an da Shairman an da Tittie ipu da idder side. Weel, bairns, I suppose we'll better geng up tu, seein your midder is set aff. I could tak a cup o tae fine mesell.

Dis singin maks you thirsty, you kno. It does dat. I'm heard at dis singers is a thirsty lot. Noo, Joanie, mind, whin du comes ta da table, du's no ta brak dee egg wi da spune an tak aff da skurm wi dee fingers. Mind dat. An du's no ta huve dee head back ower whin du drinks dee tae, an mak a noise. Tak da tae whietly ; an if dir ony sugar left i da cup, du's not ta lick it up wi da spune, mind ; an if dey aks dee if du wants ony mair, dus ta say 'Just half a cup, please.' Never forget ta say 'please' an 'thank you.' An don't clatch on da butter half a inch tick ; juist a scrape ; juist a kennin, mind, dat's da genteel wye. An yon hankey at du'll see afore dee, maybe lyin doon an maybe stickin up—juist open her up an stick her i dee trot—juist i da tap o dee waescot. An juist watch what da idder folk does ; an don't smack dee lips whin du aets. An Mary—"

"Oh, I ken weel anof what ta du, faider. You needna tell me."

"Weel, of course, dis lasses is, I kno, whicker i da uptak as da boys. As da man said, dey hae mair cann an less brains.—No, Ertly, I don't see dir only shance o pittin you hom i da motor. Shu's i da shed. An as fur wis, dir spaekin o Betty an me singin efter supper, an heth, it's hard ta say whin we'll be hom. Maybe eleevn, maybe twal o'clock. Hit's a—a—peety."

"So ; we canna help it. We'll juist hae ta tak wir fit in wir haand, as we're don mony a time afore, an mak fur it. Man, we're hed a rare nicht. Betty an dee wis wirt da lot pitten tagedder."

“Na, na”; du needna say dat. Betty is not what shu wance wis, I assure dee, an nedder am I; bit we did aa at we could. Man, madam can rattle aff da music on da instramint, an yon Mr D. hes a fine voice, alto I can’t say at I toucht at yon first thing at he sang wis a thing fur da kirk.”

“Da very wirds I said ta meself, Jirry. So, I see Lowra is makin fur aff, an I’ll hae ta geng tu. I’ll see dee da moarn, an hear hoo you get on.”

“Se be wi dee.”

“Heth, I kno, at Lowra, atween seein wis aa goin ta da hotel, an’ Betty led dere bi a jantleman, an haein ta tramp six mile o gaet, ’ill be singin somethin idder as ‘Da Sants in Glory’ ipu da rod hom.”

The P. M. was right. Lowra was in a devil of a temper—a fact which Erty realised by the ominous silence which prevailed for several hundred yards. Then the torrent broke loose.

“I don’t see what da folk is in sic a aet aboot Betty Laurenson an her voice. Da woman is don. A coo could see dat. Ta see dat staandin up dere wi dat man o hers—a uplifted dereeshin—tryin ta sing—yiss, an njaarmen too, an wir Jessie says at dat’s never aloood noo-a-days, an shu oucht ta ken, fur shu’s heard aa da singin in Lerrick—ta hear dat, whin dey wir plenty o younger an better voices i da place not even aksd ta sing—weel, it’s anof ta mak a person—”

“Du needna say yon, Lowra. Didna du say as it wis wirt traivllin six mile ta hear dem—”



“Yiss; ta hear dem makin fules o demsells. It wis wirt it.”

“Weel, faith, du’s no gotten muckle enjoymint oot o it, I tink.”

“Enjoymint! Enjoymint! Wha, wha, wha could get enjoymint oot o da laek o yon? No, no. No, I will say at some o da idder things wis no sae bad, alto I kno at wir Jessie hes a better voice as ony o dem. Bit dat’s laek dee. Du lats everybody an everything get afore dee an dine. Jessie is pitten by, an Leebie, an as fur Christie, hed it no been fur me an what I’m toiled an slaved an dybid aa mi life, yiss, dat bairn wid a been brakin stons ipu da rod, fur aa at du wid a lookid efter him or dem or gotten dem on. An Mary Laurensen, dat smatchard, penkid up laek a peacock, staandin up dere wi a air singing a bit o a hyme, whin wir Jessie could a geen dem da very highest, an broucht some credit ta da place. Bit of coorse, shu wis passed by, as uswil, an her faider never liftin a finger, no, not wan, ta help ta get her or wan o dem oot o da vargation o a croft. Yiss!”

“Du needna say at Mary wis penkit up. Shu—”

“Don’t say at shu wisna. Shu wis. Shu wis dressed abune her station, far abune her station. Bit dere du is agen. Stickin up fur dem,—fur dem an everyeen, accept dee ain. Dem tree singing, an not wan o dine, at hes better voices.”

“Weel, my Lowra, I hed nothin ta du wi da consort, or da gettin o her up. Hoo could I?—”

“Hoo could doo? Hoo could doo? Dat’s what du’s been sayin every day i dee life. Fur

evermore du's latten dis an dat, an dat an dis, slip by dee, an whaar ir we noo? whaar ir we noo? Fae da barn ta da byre, fae da byre ta da muck-kishie, fae da kishie ta da spade; toil, toil, eternal toil, an nothin fur it."

"Toil is da lot o man, we're towld."

"It's da lot o weemen, I kno dat, at ony rate, at hes ta bring up a faimly wi a man at dusna hae da spunk or da spedimint o a hen. An dan wir Betty, wir Mrs Laurenson, led up ta da hotel wi a man at writes books, an laekly sittin dere laek a wheen, an—an—an—da twa bairns, nothin better as dine, I can tell dee, sittin wi jantry; an Jirry, talkin an cairyin on laek a owld fule. An dan driven hom in wir motor, no less; an wiz, come o better folk,—fur I mind my midder tellin me at Betty's faider's grit-uncle wirked aboot dir croft fur sixpence a day an gled ta get it—wiz, hevin ta walk, yiss, ta walk ipu wir feet. An what's Jirry Laurenson, and wha is Jirry Laurenson, more as dee? Hoo does he come ta be inta dis Paet Commission? Kens he onything more aboot paets as dee, I wid laek ta ken?"

"I don't suppose he does, an I don't suppose he tinks he does."

"Weel, dan, what melishin wye is he got dere? wi pey, I'm towld, at five pound a week an found."

"Mair as dat, I'm towld."

"Mair as dat! Mair as five pound a week! Man! don't tell me dat. An dee here at never aerned five pound i da mont! Nae winder at Jirry an da hael baand o dem can dress demsells up an

rin aboot in motors. Five pound a week! Mair money as da minister, an twice as muckle as da schulemaister. Erty Maikomson, if du doesna get pitten ipu dis Cimmission afore da simmer is don, du's not wirt haein edder a wife or a faimly."

"Hoo can I get ipu da Commission?"

"Hoo can du get? Dere du goes again. Dere du is. No spunk. No, no. Non. Isna dir a meeting on Tuesday?"

"Yiss, I suppose so."

"Weel dan, go ta da meetin—heth, I'll be dere—an mak up some wye or anidder, some wye or anidder—it can alwis be done wi a person o ony sense—ta da Chairman, an enwhire if dir no oopenin fur a respectable man—certainly as respectable as Jirry Laurenson—at kens paets; paets! paets! yiss, Loard guide me, fae da graif till der huved oot in aess ipu da midden afore da door."

"Weel, I micht try an du somethin; bit I don't tink der muckle chance."

"Der du's at it again. Du never tinks, an da shances never comes; an dat's why me an my bairns see nothin afore wis bit slavery an dadery an bruck an muck, an Betty Laurenson an her bairns ridin i dir carriages an dir motors, an held up an lookit up till wi da best i da laand."

"Weel, my Lowra, I suppose it's juist luck."

"Luck! It's nothin o da kind. It's want o spediment. Want o shivin in an elbowin dee wye. As lang as du hes a morsel o maet an a smok o tabacco, da Heevens could faa aboot dee head, fur aa it du cares."

In the innermost recesses of his mind Erty

thought that his outlook on life, so vividly depicted by his stolen rib, was perhaps not the worst after all; but he was too diplomatic to say so at the present juncture. He observed that the longer the torrent rushed the heavier the volume became; and he wondered if, by the time home was reached, it would show any signs of slackening. Want of breath and physical exertion helped considerably to assuage the storm, which gradually died away to a "hard blow," but even by the time the dog came out to meet them at the yard dyke it was by no means completely laid.

After a solemn supper, Ertty, as was his regular custom as a respectable member of the kirk, gathered his flock around him to read a chapter out of the Bible. During the meal, however, he had carefully considered what chapter would be most suitable in the present state of Lowra's feelings. "In some wyes da owld prophets wid juist faa in wi her mud. 'Da Sword o da Loard an Gideon' sort o style, or da 'Slay and spare not' idee; or Daavid whin he wis prayin fur vengeance on his enemies. Bit dat nicht only mak her waar. An yit shu's in no mud ta 'forgive your enemies' an 'love your neebir better as yoursell,' an 'turnin da idder cheek' wye o da New Testamint. No, shu's not. I tink I'll go ta da Revelation, da twinty-first shapter, aboot da twal gates. A fine shapter dat, min. I winder what gate Lowra 'ill come in troo. I expect it 'ill be wan o da nort eens."

While all this was going on, another interesting conversation was being conducted between Liza Bain, her friend Clemie Twatt, and Hakie Hender-

son, an oldish young man who in Liza's opinion should have had a wife to look after him long ago, and who considered that she herself possessed all the attractions and abilities to fill the position.

"Weel, dir wan thing at's geen me juist complete seteesfaction dis nicht," said Liza.

"What wis dat? Betty's singin?"

"Betty's singin? Betty is ower weel, bit—No, no; it wisna dat, my lamb."

"What wis it, dan?"

"Did du notice hoo Lowra an da bairns an Ertty Maikomson hang aboot Betty an Jirry whin dey cam oot o da kirk? Lowra shakin haands, ye kno, an palaarevin ta Jirry, an clappin Mary ipu da shooder; an, oh, da onkerry an da praise. Butter couldna melted in her mooth. Oh, no. Aa ta get, my dear, aksd up to da hotel wi da Lowrensons, fur shu heard da Shairman aksin Betty up. Oh dat, dat; an dat juist as evilvickid, yiss, as evil-vickid in her hert, an as m-a-d, yiss, ramin, ravin mad at Betty sood be abune her edder wan wye or da idder. Yiss, an poor, simple Ertty wis set on bi Lowra ta go an whiss oot if dey couldna be pitten hom i da motor. Oh, bairns, bairns! What is pride. Lowra widna a minded sae muckle aboot no goin ta da hotel; bit fur her ta waalk hom ipu her fit, efter comin ta da kirk i da motor, minds du; an knoin at da Laurensens wis aa up at da hotel at dir supper, an wid be sent hom maybe in twa motors, in style, you kno, in style, made Lowra juist flamin, red mad. I kno Ertty, poor sowl, has hed him a time ipu da rod. I assure dee it wis wirt da hael concert ta see Lowra's face an ta ken at shu hed

been pitten in her place. Shu truly needed it."

"Lass, yon's a poor Christian speerit. Lowra is gettin ta be a owld woman, an I dunna winder at shu wis disappointed at no being pitten hom i da motor."

"Christian speerit or no, shu hes no richt ta be settin hersell up an shuvin hersell in among her betters. What tinks du, Hakie."

"I? I tink at weemen is juist laek cats; dir aye tearin een anidders een oot."

"Hakie Henderson! What does du ken about weemen? Can a person no pass a remark about anidder ithoot bein caa'd a cat?"

"It depends hoo da remark is passed, my Liza. What toucht ye o da concert!"

"Da concert? Da concert wis ower weel," said Liza.

"Ower weel?" said Clemie. "Lass, du's in a evil frame o mind dis nicht. Da concert wis juist graand. I assure dee du'll no hear better as yon in Lerrick. Yon wis a fine thing, yon 'Comfort ye,' an da rest o it; an Betty, Oh, I toucht Betty an Jirry as guid as ony, alto it wis only a owld hyme. What toucht du, Hakie?"

"I toucht a lock o some o it, an I toucht as little o some o da rest. I laekid yon lass at sang 'Rest in da Loard,' bit yon 'gl-o-o-o-o-ry' thing, man, hit wis a—I don't kno what ye wid caa it; it wis more laek a reel, an reels is only fur da fiddle."

"Yiss, bit Jessie Maikomson towld me—an Jessie hes music, du knos; shu wis a whaarter at music in Lerrick—at it's a very hard thing ta sing richt,"



"Weel dan, edder da man couldna sing it, or dan it wis oot o its place, or dan da man at wrot it hed little wit, for I see no sense in it at aall. Noo, I laeked yon 'Life fur evermore' thing. He sang dat weel. An yon lass at played; heth shu can play, dat shu can. Bit von thing at da minister caad a whartet! Loard bliss me. I don kno what da man at set it doon wid a toucht hed he been lisnin. I suppose laek da most o dis composers, he's dead, an a good job too, fur hed he been i da kirk a hoor ago he wid a been taen oot ipun a streetcher."

"What toucht du o Betty an Jirry?"

"I'm heard Betty in her prime, you kno, an Jirry too. Min, Jirry hed a bess voice laek da deep nots at ye hear i da organs in Lerrick. Fine an roond an saft, or lood—onything at ye laekid. Oh yiss, in his day Jirry hed da voice. Bit dir gettin don. Da people is gettin don."

"Dir maybe gettin don, bit da remains is dere."

"Oh, yiss da remains is dere; bit ah—ah—ah"

"Is du still goin in fur da fiddle yet, Hakie?"

"Oh yae, a peerie coarn. Bit I don't hae much time. Dis croft—"

"Time! Du doesna hae time? Dee, at hes nedder wife or bairn," said Clemie; "nothin ta du bit ta rise up i da moarnin an look efter deesell aa day."

"Feth, I fin dat plenty, an ower muckle sometimes."

"What else can it be? Na, na, my Hakie, what doo needs is less o da fiddle an more o da human. Instead o shakin da fiddle up du needs a



wife ta shak dee up. Dat's what du needs. Noo, here's Liza—"

"Lass, will do howld dee impidence? Me tak a man? No, no. I'm no seen da man yit at I wid go an toil an slave about."

"Maybe no. So Hakie, dir juist twa things du's got ta du. Du's been yarkin away at dat fiddle fur twinty-five year, an du's don nothin wi her ootside o dee nown hoose. Du's keepid her aa ta deesell. Noo, ithin da nixt tree monts du'll edder hae ta gie a concert deesell i da skule fur da Rid Cross, or tak a wife—wan o da twa. I don kno what'll be da aesist, I'm sure—da gettin up o da concert, or da gettin howld o a lass. Dat's fur dee ta find oot. Bit wan o da twa du hes ta do, mind dat. If du doesna, dan du'll juist be pitten doon i da perish for wan it's nedder fur use nor ornamint."

Liza and Clemie went one way, and Hakie another. Ruminating on what Clemie had said, Hakie came to the conclusion that while it would certainly be much more risky, it would be infinitely easier to "get howld o a lass" and make her his wife than to "work up" a programme of fiddle pieces to provide a concert; while Liza, notwithstanding her protests, felt that to be mistress of Hakie's excellent house and croft, not to mention of Hakie himself, would in large measure compensate for the "toil and slavery" inseparable from such a position.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

Meggie is "seek ta da hert wi dis everlastin cookin," and wishes "ta Him at made her at some man wid come an tak her."

MOST of the members of the Commission were in the hotel when the Chairman, Mr E., Betty, Jerry, and the bairns arrived. Meggie had received full instructions what to do before the concert began, and had made preparations accordingly, her only demand being that she must have an hour's grace, after the concert, to get the supper ready, for on no account would she miss it.

"It's no muckle i da wye o shange at I hae," she remarked to her sister, who was a frequent visitor to the kitchen, "cookin an peelin, an cleanin an washin, an stewin an rostin, every day o your life. I wiss ta da Loard at made dem at dis folk could du ithoot aetin, fur I'm perfetly seek, yiss, seek ta da hert, o dis everlastin cookin. Oh, I wiss ta Him at made me at som man wid com an tak me."

"Weel, lass, du wid be nae better aff. Maybe waar."

"Waar I couldna be fur wark," said Meggie, wiping her streaming face in her white apron. "No. At ony rate, what ye cookid, if ye hed it, wid be fur your ain, an dat mak's a big differ, I assure dee. Woman, da whantity o food at goes

doon da trapples an i da stamicks o dis baand is unmentionable. An it maun aa be da very best. Da rosts o beef an, an da bacan, an mutton, an tongue, an fruit, an butter, an bread an biscuits, forby tins o dis, dat an da idder thing; an fresh fish, an tea, an coffee, an cocoa, an He alon kens what else at comes fae Lerrick, du widna believe, no, du widna believe at da perrish could go trow it. Trow it! It's harly shunner in as it's don. I assure dee at dir some o dis men at could aet a horse ahint da saidle at wan sittin."

"Weel, Meggie, it's a helty sign. Da folk is livin, an dey want ta enjoy life as weel as dey can."

"Heth, dir livin, dir nae mistak aboot dat. An enjoying life is aa at I see dey du. Dey du nothin, else at I see. Can du tell me, juist can dee or ony idder body say what dis set, dis Paet Commission is fur?"

"Weel, I'm towld it's ta fin oot aa aboot paets."

"Loard guide dat! Paets! paets! Muckle dey ken, or ever will, aboot paets. Na; it taks da laek o me ta ken aboot paets. Yiss, an dan I widna care, wi aa dis extree guid food at dir gettin, five an six times i da day, at dir some o dem—I don't say dir aa laek dat, no, I don't—sae perskeet an sae perteeclar at a sant widna plaese dem. Dir wan o dem—oh, dat objec—da wan at wears specs an is alwis stimin an rutin inta books, at does du kno winna aet a egg if shu wis mair as wan day owld."

"Hoo can he ken whidder da egg is een or twa or even tree days owld?"

"Ken? Ken? Da man hes da scent o a dug,

I'm tellin dee. He sniffs it oot in a wye at—at—at's really no canny. I juist tried him da idder day. Dey aa hae eggs fur brakwist, an some o dem twa or tree; an yesterday mornin I boiled anof fresh, new-laid eggs, at I was perfectly sure wis fresh, aa accept wan at I toucht I wid risk, at wis twa days owld. Of coorse dat objec hed ta get dat perteeclar wan. If dir wan waar is anidder, he's sure ta get howld o it. An what did his loardship du bit send da lass ta me wi da egg, an towld her ta say he wis payin fur fresh, new-laid eggs, an no fur eggs twa an a-half days owld. Da owld hae-thin."

"Isna dat da man at writes da books?"

"Fur writin I kno not. He stoors anof i dem. Dat's aa at I ken."

"Dey say he's a great man, at's written a lock o books."

"Weel, da folk at reads his books mann be as grit fules as himsel. Lass, da man is ignorant. He knos nothin aboot what's goin on aroond him every day. Does du ken what he aksd me da day afore yistirday?"

"No."

"He cam inta da keetchin—oh, he's no a upstickid sort o a body at aall; heth he wid need ta be mair o dat wye, fur he canna even tie his buit laces richt, an as fur his tie, an da tabacca ashes at's alwis lying aboot da breest o his cot, an sometimes da red o da eggs—he cam inta da keetchin, I wis saying, an said he wanted ta aks me somethin he wisna sure aboot. Of coorse I said if I could tell him I wid du sae. Does du kno what he aksd?

Does do kno what da man actually aksd?"

"Hoo can I ken?"

"Weel, he aksd me if I could tell him hoo lang it took fur a paet ta grou."

Aanie's ringing laugh was good to hear.

"An what did du say?"

"Say? What could I say? I said I supposed some o da paets wis plantid whin da world wis creaatid, an some o dem efter, fur paets is no aa da sam—some is owld an some looks young, in compare. Yiss, an dat's da man at writes books; an I'm towld he's ta write a book aboot paets too. Heth, I'll hae her, if I sood sell me old boots, whin shu comes oot. Shu'll be wirt readin, I kno. An anidder time, aa aboot dis eggs, he cam inta da keetchin an said, 'I wish to ask you how it is that frequently we get eggs at the table two days old. Now, I understand that in the summer time, at any rate, hens lay new-laid eggs every day, so there should be no difficulty in supplying them.' 'Weel, you don't suppose,' I said, 'at da hens wid lay rotten eggs, du you?' 'No,' he said, 'probably not. But my difficulty is, if hens lay new-laid, fresh eggs every day, why are they not supplied?' 'Wha said at hens laid eggs every day? Loard bliss you, man,' I said, 'du you tink at hens can lay every day ithoot hippin wan, an maybe twa or tree? Don't da animals need a rest as weel as ony idder person? An wha can tell whidder da hen laid da egg this moarnin, or yisterday, or da day afore? Wid ye set somebody ta go an watch dem?' 'Weel,' he sid, 'that might be a very good plan. The eggs could then be graded according

to age.' 'Yiss,' I said, 'an hev da hel popilation o da persih runnin efter da hens every day ta fin oot whaar dey laid a egg. Hoo wid da wark get on, I wid laek ta ken? Dat wid never du. Da folk wid fant fur want. Na, aless ye fixed up every hen wi a box, or a peerie tinnie, an a clock ta tell whin shu wis laid. An dan you wid need ta tell da hens aa ta come hom an lat wis ken whin dey hed laid dir eggs.' Dat's da answer he got fae me. Oh fur dat dereeshan! I'm tellin dee what it is, Aanie, dis men at writes hes no more sense as some o da hens at he wis speakin aboot. An da warst o it is, dey haena da sense to kno at dey hae no sense. Dat's da warst o it. Dir edder goin aboot stoorin i da Heevens or stimin inta some book, an atween da wan an da idder dey never see what's goin on at dir very fit. It's wan Loard's mercy shurly, at da laek o yon never got a wife. Shu wid a hed a time wi him. Oh, dear-a-dear, fur sic a life."

"Weel, Meggie, I suppose du's paid fur aa dis. Du'll be gettin fine tips fae aa dis jantry."

"I'm seen non yit, an I'm no expecin muckle. If da objecs wid come an go, be away fur a while an dan come back, an gie a body something fur aa da slavery every time, it widna be sae bad; bit heth, dey ken better. Dir ower weel aff, I assure dee, as my bons kens. Efter brakwist, its read, or play, or coort; efter lunch da sam, an dis golf; efter tea, a bit o a walk, an efter dener, He save me at made me, as dir not fit fur onything bit ta sleep. Dan dey most hae supper efter dis, minds du—milk or coco; an dan heth, dir gotten a notion noo at



dey laek bannocks, ban-nocks, some o dem caa dem, hom-made bread, ye kno; so amung aa dis I hae ta set me tu an bake every noo an dan. Dey'll be wantin burstin brunies nixt, an maybe liver-heads an stap. If dey want onything more, I'll hae ta get help, dat's wan thing."

"I ken o a fine ting o a lass," said Aanie, taking a cup of tea, along with hot buttered toast, in her hand, which Meggie handed her, "at wid be gled ta come fur twartree weeks an gie dee a haand."

"Aanie, don't spaek about dis lasses noo-a-days; don't do it," replied Meggie, sitting in to a well-earned rasher of Wiltshire bacon, eggs, tea, and toast. "Da tryst at I'm haein wi da lass ats supposed ta help wi keepin da place clean is anof. Shu only maks mair wark, I assure dee. Does du kno what I fann her duin ta tidder day—not wan day edder, bit twa, yiss, tree days—"

"No."

"I fann at dat hissy hed sweepid roond a match—wan match, da sam match, fur tree days runnin, lyin in da sam spot ipu da fluir."

"Lass, hit's no been da sam match; hit's shurly been annider een."

"Aanie, da match wis da sam wan, fur I nickid her da first day I fan her, juist ta watch mi leddy. Na, na; dir no use o speakin o da lasses noo-a-days. Dey don't hae anof o da muck-kishie, my jewel, an da spade, an da harrow, yiss, an da tushkar too—dat's what's wrang wi dem. It's nothin bit readin an playin an dancin, an kerryin on, dressed wi sylk, an velvet mutches, an blooses



o every shape an form; an as fur da hats on a Sunday! Weel, I'll never spaek. Na, dir no been broucht up laek me—du wis younger, an didna ken what it wis—wi dir nose ta da grind-stane. Look at wir midder. Look at wir midder, an wir faeder too. Da wan wis eichty-two an da idder wis eichty-fower, whin dey deed, yiss, wi every teeth i dir head, an harly needin specs excep ta read Bible print. Strong an soople aa dir lives, becaas dey wirkid, dey hed ta wirk, ipu da laand."

"Weel, Meggie, du knos at wirkin ipu da laand is juist slavery."

"Maybe it is; bit it's better as sittin knittin or guttin herrin. An da laek o dat at knos nothin bit madram an foaly, dat's ta be da wives an da midders. Woman, dey don't hae da sense ta be edder wan or da idder, dey don't. Weel, weel, at ony rate, da things is aa reddy i da dinin-room fur da folk whin dey come doon-stairs, an I'm reddy tu, an we'll get ower it some wye. Betty an Jirry an da bairns is come fae da kirk wi dem, I suppose."

"Dat ir dey."

"Weel, dir moadrit, daecint folk, an I hae naethin ta say aboot dem bit what's guid. Betty is gettin failed, puir body, and Jerry is no sae young as he wance wis, bit heth, dir plenty o life itil him yit. He wis alwis a jokesome, cheery kind o a sowl, Jerry. Is dis dee, Joanie? Du's a young jantleman noo, wi dee new strood an dee watch an chain," said Meggie, putting an arm round Joanie's neck, and patting him on the head, for Meggie was very fond a "da bit o boy," an indeed of all children.

Joanie said nothing. He just smiled

“Noo, mind, Joanie,” continued Meggie, for she was very solicitous regarding the table manners of her friends, “du’s no ta use yon big white naepkin at du’ll fin stickin afore dee laek a pocket-hanky. Mind dat. It’s fur spreadin afore dee, du knows, ta keep dee fine claes clean. So geng du awa in trow an fin a place. A boanie boy, Joanie, juist laek his midder,” she remarked to Aanie, as Joanie left the kitchen, and bashfully and diffidently made his way to the dining-room, thinking if he had to keep in mind all the directions he had received. the meal he would be likely to dispose of would hardly be sufficient to satisfy a healthy boy’s appetite.

“Now, Mrs Laurensen, my dear madam,” said the Chairman, “you sit here beside me, please. Miss Mary, will you go with our worthy vice, who always sits at the other end of the table. Your goodman will take his place in the centre there, to the right, along with Joanie, vour bonnie boy, who, I am sure, is as good as his mother, and that’s sayin a great deal. (“He says nothin aboot da faider,” whispered the P. M. to the Tittie, who sat on his other side. “But you say that boys always take after their mothers.” “Dat is true till a certain extent; bit da boy maun hae a faider as weel as a midder, you kno.”) By this arrangement you will be able to keep your eye on the whole three—perhaps a necessary proceeding.” The Chairman was in fine fettle, and showed himself at his best.

“I’m been duin dat aa dir life, bit I dunna ken if it’s done ony gude.”

“Oh, it’s done good; there can be no question about that, although sometimes it may not appear

very evident. You must never forget, my dear Mrs Laurensen, the restraining influence exerted by a good wife and mother, like yourself. It's like religion. It is unseen, yet felt. Now, here we are; here's the teapot, steaming hot; and coffee, and cocoa, as well. I think we'll pass the coffee and cocoa down; we'll stick to the tea. Tea never comes amiss, someway or other. Now, will you please do the honours and pour out tea for the six up here? Sugar? Oh, yes, we all take sugar. I like three lumps myself, in a large cup. It needs it, Mrs Laurensen; it needs it. What is tea without a proper quantity of sugar?"

"He's white richt dere, I will say," muttered the P. M. "Betty alwis laekid a heavy lump o sugar i da first cup, an aye made provision fur it, fur shu never hed less as seeven pound o hard sugar i da hoose. Betty alwis used ta say, 'Gie me mi first cup richt, hot an strong, an plenty o sugar in it; I'm no carin sae muckle aboot da second een.'"

"Can I offer you a boiled egg, or a poached egg, or a scrambled egg? We have them all here. Or perhaps you would like a bit of this delicious cold tongue—a tongue I heard Meggie (a fine cook, Meggie, and a fine girl) say was her 'nown baiking.' I confess I did not quite understand what she meant. I did not know that tongue was baked?"

"Oh, dat's juist Meggie's wye," replied Betty, "o sayin shu hed pickled it, cured da tongue, ye ken, hersell. Shu's a graand haand, Meggie, at da cookin."

“ Oh, I see. It’s her way of saying it’s her own production, and not a tinned article. Now, do let me have the pleasure of helping you to this fresh scrambled egg—(do you know our Literary Member, he there, with the glasses, is a demon on eggs; if I mistake not, by the look on his face, the egg he has got is not quite up to his high standard) on this crisp buttered toast. The tongue can follow. That’s better, now. The tea? The tea is simply perfect. You have struck my taste exactly.”

“ Heth, Betty looks weel anof up yonder, I assure you, wi her new fal-de-rals on, an da pearl broch; poorin oot da tae wi da air o wan at’s been duin it aa her life.”

“ Of course,” said the Tittie. “ Betty is a woman, and can therefore adapt herself in a moment to any circumstances in which she may be placed. She has perception—intellect. She’s not a clumsy, bungling man.”

“ Weel, faith, if da weemen hae intellect, it shune comes till a end. It staands still; it never gets ony farder. Dey juist see wan thing.”

“ But they see that thing very clearly. They’re not like men, who try to see so many things at one time that the little brain they have gets utterly confused and jumbled up. That’s why men are forever fighting, and quarrelling, and killing one another. They try to do so many things at the same time that they do nothing right.”

“ So. Noo at aa da weemen is ta get da vot, I suppose wis men ’ill hae nothin ta du bit sit hom an smok wir pipes. Da world ’ill move laek a shewin machine noo, I suppose. So be it, my

jewel. It's a great peety at it hedna come shuner. What kind or whality o oil ir ye gaen ta use fur da new machine?"

"Oh, we haven't got the vote yet, but it's coming. When it does, we will make many changes, I assure you."

"Dir twa shanges ye'll no mak, I kno."

"What are they?"

"Ye'll no pit men aff da face o da eart; an ye'll no shange human natir. Noo, Joanie, didna I tell dee no ta brak da skurm o dee egg wi dee spune? Cut da tap o him, min. Dat's it. Noo, drink dee tae whietly."

"Ye'll maybe no be able to faa in love whin ye get dis vot? Dat'll maybe be ower sentimental, ye kno. Whin ye see a young chap head an ears in love wi you, as we used ta say in my young days, you'll laekly geng an aks him if he's feelin ill, an tell him ta geng till a panel doctor fur a prescription. Ye'll be aa fur howldin meetins, an makin speeches, an every wan rinnin aboot tellin every idder wan what dey sudna du, an laevin da bairns an da hooses ta tak care o demsells. Weel, weel; my day is gettin don, my jewel, an it's not muckle ye'll shange me. Heth, it's hard ta say aboot Betty, though. Wance shu's tasted blod, as da man said, it's hard ta say what shu micht come till. Ye micht fin Betty giein a lecturer on da weekedness o man, i da Toon Haall o Lerrick yit, ta fower hunder mairried weemen drawn fae da Skaw o Onst ta Sumburgh Head. Weel, shu's got a big subject, if shu taks dat een, I kno. Ye can look at it in sae mony lights at a dizzen lectirs widna du. So,

so, bairns; I suppose we're aa as da Loard made wiz."

"Yes; but in future we're going to lick you into better shape; we'll put some polish on you, and take some of the 'lord and master' idea out of you."

"Do you kno, my Tittie, I'm gettin kind o frichtened fur you. Yon's mair laek a speech fae Madam. What's shu doin aa dis time? I can see shu's juist red mad. Mr D. is not lookid wance at her fae we sat doon."

"Didn't I tell you that little affair was off?"

"Yiss; bit wha pat it aff? It wisna her. Yae, alto shu's gaen ta get da vot, my jewel, shu wid shune gie up da vot fur Mr D. Oh, ye ir a haand, you weemen! What's dis at da vice-chairman is sayin?"

The vice-Chairman was saying that before rising from the table he had a small intimation to make. He and the chairman had considered, seeing it was such a lovely evening, and seeing that their good friends lived a considerable distance away, it would be a delightful close to this most delightful day for the whole members of the Commission to accompany them to their home. (Loud applause, in which Joanie innocently joined). Instructions had therefore been given for the four motors to be at the door at eleven o'clock. It was only a little past ten now; but it was suggested that before setting out a little more music would fittingly round off a day clothed with so many pleasant memories. The drive, he was sure, in the summer dim, would be thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. (More applause.)

“Dat’s very good o dem, I most say. I hoop dey’ll juist turn, though, fir wir room couldna howld dem; an Betty hes only fower cups i da hoose.”



## CHAPTER XXXVII.

After supper the P. M. and the Tittie have a bit of an argument;  
and the Chairman announces that the Commission is to have  
a Distinguishing Badge or Coat-of-Arms.

"Now, Mrs Laurenson," said the Chairman, "you really must favour us with some more of these delightful old hymns just to finish off the evening."

"I'm heard it said at it's no gude ta sing shune efter aetin, an I'm gaen ta hae a smok. Betty can sing as muckle as shu laeks; I'll no stop her; bit a smok I'm goin ta hev," remarked the P. M. to the Tittie, looking for a seat in the corner of the room. The Chairman was looking for hymn books, and bringing his persuasive powers to bear on Betty to induce her to sing.

"There you are. There you are again. Now, that one thing alone proclaims men to be lower beings than women. Wherever men are, whatever they are doing, no matter what they are engaged in, they must have their smoke. You even see them coming to church smoking; and as soon as they are outside the door, they light up, as they call it. Now, women simply could not do these things. They have more reverence for what is higher; more spirituality, more seeking and striving after the true and beautiful, than to degrade a religious ser-

vice by coming to it or leaving it with a pipe in their mouths. Ther natures would not permit of such a thing."

"Weel, I don kno. I'm not seen a great dael of it meself. Fur da speerituality, as you caa it, I wid a laekid ta heard da sample o it at Lowra Maikomson gae Erty ipu da rod hom da nicht, fur bi da look o her face whin dey set oot da wadder signs wisna very gude. Mi nown opinion is at Erty hes mair rael speerituality as Lowra, alto he doesna say muckle aboot it. An as fur da strivin an da seekin efter da true an da beautiful, as ye say, maybe; we sall say nothin, bit we tink a lock, my jewel. Of coorse, if ye tak in dress, ye're afore wis dere, I will say."

"I don't mean dress and worldly things. I mean that women have a higher and truer religious instinct than men; seek more naturally after the higher things of life, and are altogether a finer, purer, and more delicate creation."

"Weel, if dat is so, it's very funny at dey hev-na shawn it. Sae far as I can mak oot, aa da best things i da world is been don bi men. Da Bible wis written bi men—inspired men. Noo, why wis da weemin no inspired tu, ta set doon a pairt o her, at ony rate, since dey hed dis great speerituality. Can ye tell me dat?"

"Oh, that was simply because men arrogated and kept to themselves all power and all learning and all art; and women, being physically weaker, had to submit, and never got a chance."

"Yiss, bit if dis speerituality wis sae strong as ye say, men couldna a keepid it bund up an

strappid in. It wid a come oot, in spite o dem. Of coorse, noo at ye're gaen ta get da vot, it's hard ta say what ye'll du. Ye'll maybe mak a Bible o your ain."

"Oh, no; we'll not make a Bible of our own; but we'll see that men observe more than they do the precepts of the Bible."

"Weel, ye hae a job afore you. Dat's all I can say. An dan, it wis a man at wrot da Psalms o Daavid, an da 'Pilgrim's Progress,' an 'Robinson Crusoe,' an Burn's poems; an as fur da hymes an da music, wha made dem?"

"Yes, but it was a woman who wrote the finest battle-hymn the world knows."

"Bit I toucht at weemen wis aa speeritual. Dey wirna fur fechtin, an battles."

"Yes, but this is a spiritual battle-hymn, calling on the good to overcome the evil. Don't you know it? Listen:

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of  
the Lord;

He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes  
of wrath are stored;

He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His  
terrible swift sword.

His Truth is marching on.

Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!

His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred  
circling camps;

They have buildd Him an altar in the evening  
dews and damps;

I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and  
flaring lamps;  
His Day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel, writ in burnished  
rows of steel;  
“As ye deal with My contemners, so with you  
My grace shall deal;”  
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent  
with His heel,  
Since God is marching on.

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never  
call retreat;  
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His  
judgment seat;  
Oh! be swift, my soul, to answer Him; be  
jubilant, my feet!  
Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born, across  
the sea,  
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you  
and me;  
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make  
men free!  
While God is marching on.”

“Yon is a fine thing, dir nae doot aboot dat.  
Yiss, yiss. Bit dan, you see, da woman at wrot  
yon mann be juist da exception at proves da rule,  
as dey say. Na, na, my dear, ye’re juist as da  
Loard creatid you, an aa at ye can du ’ill no alter  
dat, I assure you. Noo, wid ye juist tell me wha  
maks, or creaats,—I don kno what ye caa it—aa da

lovely goons at dis great leddies wears, an wha mad yon bonnie costum—dey caa a dress a costum noo, ye kno—at ye hed on da day? Wis it a man or a woman?”

“ Oh, that brown costume I wore in the morning? What’s that got to do with the matter? That was a tailor-made.”

“ I towld you dat. Woman, ye canna cled yersells ta sense aless yet get men ta help you.”

“ Oh, go away; you always twist things up in favour of the men. There’s one thing women can do better than men, at any rate.”

“ What’s dat, my jewel?”

“ They can take the measure of things, and men, too, a great deal better.”

“ Weel, I widna say bit what ye’re richt. Heth, dir gotten Betty ta start. Shu’s taen ‘ Shall We Gather at the River?’ No a bad thing dat. Noo, join i da chorus, noo. Come away. Ye hae a boanie peerie voice.” And taking the pipe out of his mouth, the P. M. lent his bass organ to swell the chorus that wafted through the open windows and spread itself into the quiet night, making the sheep look up and come running to see what it was all about. As a finished performance, the chorus-singing would have laid itself open to many objections, for few of the voices blended, and each chorister made a part for her or his self that did not always harmonize. But as an impromptu Sunday evening musical effort, it had much to commend it. Betty stood near the piano, which was manipulated by Miss G.; and sang in a simple way, with a tremulous but sweet and touching voice, this, an-

other of her old favourites; the Chairman stood close by with a hymn-book in his hand, and entered into the spirit of the proceedings whole-heartedly. He joined in the chorus as far as he was able, sometimes singing the air, sometimes the bass, and again the tenor, but apparently he always found a good deal of difficulty with the "beautiful, beautiful," part, which at last he gave up attempting. Generally, however, he came in strong on the "river," and on the last note. The others, some standing, some sitting, the imp curled up on the sofa, all added their quota to the ensemble, which, as Jerry said, "at a distance widna a soondid sae bad." At one time the imp was caught whistling his part; but a look from the Tittie called him instantly to a realisation of where he was, and to his want of proper feeling. Joanie sat still, with his hands in his pockets, looking from one to the other, wishing it was all over, and longing for the time he would be in the motor, spanking for home.

"Absolutely delightful, Mrs Laurenson. Beautiful. What a voice you must have had, when it is so lovely yet. There is nothing like these dear old hymns, that come straight form the heart. Now, Mr Laurenson, we cannot trespass any more on your better half's good nature. You will have to favour us now."

"I don kno. Ye micht get some o da idders ta sing first. I'm no feenished mi smok. Da chorus lat da pipe oot. Dat's da warst wi dis singin. Ye canna sing an smok at da sam time. At laest, it's no aesy, alto I hev managed it sometimes, bi laevin oot twartree nots an takin a wheef ta keep

her goin. Couldna Mester D. gie wis somethin?"

"This is not a performance, you know. It's just the singing of a few hymns."

"Yiss, I kno. Bit he shurly kens hymes as weel as wiz."

"The worst about these classical men, you know, is they don't know hymns very well."

"Weel, I'm soary fur dem, dan. He can shurly sing somethin."

Thus pressed, Mr D. said he would sing the hymn, or chant, rather, "For all Thy love and goodness." And although the tune might be unfamiliar, he had no doubt they would soon pick up and join in the chorus parts of the hymn, arranged, he might say, by Sullivan to joyous music. In a manner which carried his audience completely with him, Mr D. sang this beautiful hymn:—

For all Thy love and goodness, so bountiful and  
free,

Thy name, Lord, be adored!

On the wings of joyous praise our hearts soar up  
to Thee:

Glory to the Lord!

The springtime breaks all round about, waking  
from winter's night:

Thy name, Lord, be adored!

The sunshine, like God's love, pours down in  
floods of golden light:

Glory to the Lord!

A voice of joy is in all the earth, a voice is in  
all the air:

Thy name, Lord, be adored!



All nature singeth aloud to God; there is glad-  
ness everywhere:  
Glory to the Lord!

The flowers are strown in field and copse, on the  
hill and on the plain:  
Thy name, Lord, be adored!  
The soft air stirs in the tender leaves that cloth  
the trees again:  
Glory to the Lord!

The works of Thy hands are very fair; and for  
all Thy bounteous love  
Thy name, Lord, be adored!  
But what, if this world is so fair, is the better  
land above?  
Glory to the Lord!

O to awake from death's short sleep, like the  
flowers from their wintry grave!  
Thy name, Lord, be adored!  
And to rise all glorious in the day when Christ  
shall come to save!  
Glory to the Lord!

O to dwell in that happy land where the heart  
cannot choose but sing!  
Thy name, Lord, be adored!  
And where the life of the blessed ones is beauti-  
ful endless spring!  
Glory to the Lord! Hallelujah! Amen.

At the third verse the whole company were on their feet, carried away as much by the poet as by the singer and composer, all joining in on the second and fourth lines of each verse.

"Ah man, dat is graand. It's kind o wheer, bit dir somethin aboot it at taks hould o you, do you kno. Do you caa yon a chant?"

"Yes, probably one of the finest ever written."

"Weel, I want ta hear nothin better. Noo, it s da Tittie's turn. Shu's wantin ta sing neist—"

"Be quiet. I don't want to sing."

"Weel, ye wir lookin i da book."

"Oh yes, Miss F. Please do oblige with the next number. Any little thing. The simpler the better, but we all like to join in, you know."

In her own simple, unpretentious manner, the Tittie went to the piano and sang "When He Cometh to make up His Jewels," in the chorus of which all joined.

"Dat's a boanie peerie thing, juist laek yoursell," was the P. M.'s comment as she sat down.

"Now, Mr Laurensen, we cannot pass you any longer. What are you going to give us?"

"Weel, I kno nothin wi a chorus at you aa laekly ken accep 'Da Lifeboat.'"

"Excellent. What's the chorus?"

'Pull for the shore, sailor; pull for the shore;  
Heed not the rolling waves, but bend to the oar.'

That's it; yes. Now then, we'll join in at the proper time. You start."

Putting his pipe in his pocket "juist as shu wiz," and getting hold of a hymn-book, the P. M. stood up and started without instrumental accompaniment—

“ Light in the darkness, sailor, day is at hand ;  
See o’er the foaming billows fair Haven’s land.  
Drear was the voyage, sailor, now almost o’er ;  
Safe within the lifeboat, sailor, pull for the  
shore ! ”

He had not proceeded very far, however, until Miss G. had found the key in which he was singing ; and by the time the chorus was reached, and all joined in, the piano was, as Jerry said, in “ full blast,” and materially assisted to make this chorus one of the heartiest of the evening. The P. M. had got into fine form by the time the last verse was begun ; and when he came to the last line,

“ Glory, glory, hallelujah ! Pull for the shore,”

his performance recalled his best days and his finest efforts.

“ Thank you, Mr Laurensen ; thank you. Hearty and full of fire. Just such a chorus as everyone can join in. Now, as a close, I would propose the Second Paraphrase to the fine old tune ‘ Kilmar-nock.’ Mrs Laurensen, you will lead us, please.”

This real old Scottish tune, which all knew, furnished ample scope for Betty’s talents and style. She loved the Paraphrase and the tune ; and unconsciously, in singing it she dropped into the old-style “ njaarm ” here and there, a method of singing which, however objectionable to modern ears, has an earnestness and sincerity about it that “ dis barrel-organ kind o singin ” which Jerry disliked so much, distinctly lacks.

Just as the last notes died away, the door opened and the girl appeared with a tray of steaming hot tea and bread and butter.

"Ah, here we are. Just what is needed. A nice hot cup of tea before we set out. We have had a most delightful, a most memorable day, Mrs Laurensen, for which we are indebted in great measure to you. After this tea, and the run to your home and back we will be ready to retire, and take the rest necessary for our labours during the next few days. When you ladies retire to make yourselves ready, we men will discuss and plan out our programme. We must get on with the work, you know; we have to get on with the work."

"Yae, da wark hes ta be don, dat is sure," replied Betty, wondering in her mind what precisely the nature of the work was the Chairman referred to, and having very clear visions of the precise nature of the work she herself had to take up in the morning.

"Noo at dey ir gon—an dey'll be awaa half-a-hoor at ony rate—we'll hae ta settle what we're ta du da moarn."

"The clergy generally have a day off on Monday," said Mr D., with a glance at the minister.

"Oh, dey; dey hae a day aff whinever dey lack, beggin your pardon, sir. Bit it's different wi wiz, you kno. We're Govermint servants, ve see, an we hae ta wirk. Bit dir wan thing we will hae ta du. We'll hae to send ta Lerrick fur da tree tushkars we forgot ta tak up."

"What do we need the tushkars for?" asked the Vice-Chairman.

"Oh, I consider the tushkars essential," said the Chairman. "Not so much for the use we may put them to; for after our last experience I doubt if any of us, except our Practical friend, will be enthusiastic about actual peat-casting. But gentlemen, you must remember, that the tushkar is what I may term our sign and symbol, our trade mark, if I may say that a Commission has a trade mark."

"Yiss, dat's my idee too. Da tree new tushkars, you kno, wid look fine staandin up i da whire, wan at ivery side an wan i da middle. It wid lat da folk ken what we wir about."

"Precisely," said the Chairman. "Our Practical Member is always practical. He generally strikes the nail on the head, often in a blunt and straight way, but he usually strikes it. You see, as I think I said at our opening meeting, there are three essential characteristics about a Royal Commission which we must never lose sight of. These are:—first, dignity; secondly, deliberation; thirdly, impressiveness."

"An da wark," interposed the P. M.

"Oh, yes, yes, the work, of course. But whatever you do, or fail or neglect to do, never forget to impress the public. That's very essential. The public assess people, and particularly is this the case with public bodies, very much as they assess themselves. Dignity, therefore; deliberation as opposed to haste or hurry, are vital factors in this connection."

"Dir no muckle dignity wi a tushkar at ever I kent o."

"There's the dignity of labour, my dear friend.

You forget that. Where would we be but for labour?"

"Dat's what I wid laek ta know meself."

"Now, although some people would be disposed to say that there is not much dignity in members of a Royal Commission going about carrying three tushkars—even new tushkars—or even in exhibiting them in a church as a sign and symbol of their activities, those who speak and think in that manner are making a profound mistake. I for one, would not be ashamed to be seen carrying a tushkar on my shoulder even to the church."

"Weel, I'm don plenty o tushkar-kerrying an tushkar-wark aa mi life, so fur my pairt, I could kerry da lot," said the P. M., while the others looked as if they would be inclined to "pass."

"But it is not necessary, gentlemen; it is not necessary that each should carry the actual implement itself, in our peregrinations. I have been thinking over this matter. Like many others of importance, it has given me much thought. I have, as a result of this consideration, decided that we shall have a coat-of-arms, from which can be fashioned a seal for our voluminous correspondence. (Applause). I think we may even go further, and get buttons—gold buttons—made with a suitable design, and a badge, that everyone connected with this Commission could wear. The necessity for carrying tushkars would thus be obviated. I hardly think that the time is yet ripe for a special uniform—

"Na, if ye're gaen ta denk wiz up in uniforms, dan I tink I'll gie it up," said Jerry.

"And yet, gentlemen, a uniform adds weight,

dignity, and that impressiveness which are so essential in anything connected with the Government. It is very odd, but it is a fact, that once you clothe a man in a uniform, he becomes a different being. People look up to him, somehow."

"Dat's juist becaas da people hae nae sense. Da man is juist da sam, altho nae doot he's mair stuck up."

"The matter of the uniform, however, can be left over for future consideration. A coat-of-arms we must have, and I had come to the conclusion that the following might do :—

Or, three tushkar heads, erased gules,  
Crest, a demi-lion azure, casting peats.  
Supporters, two falcons, or, raising peats.  
Motto—"Ora et labora."

"Bliss you, lions don't cast peats at ever I heard o' an fawkins canna raise dem. I see no sense in yon."

"Yes, my friend, but you must know that in heraldry animals are used as symbols. It would be incongruous to put a man on the coat-of-arms casting peats. We take a lion to represent a man, and the falcon to represent a woman."

"I see. Weel, it's a wheer wye o doin. An what's yon or, an gules, an azure, or what do ye caa it?"

"That's just the heraldic way of denoting colour and engraving. I assure you the arms will look first-rate."

"An what's yon 'ora,' thing?—what du ye caa it?"



“ ‘Ora et labora’ — Pray and work.”

“ Weel, fur my pairt, I’m alwis been used ta wirk an pray. Ye maun du da wark first, an pray efter, I tink.”

“ Work is prayer, my friend, in the true sense.”

“ Maybe. Dir some folk at doesna pray very muckle, dan, in dis world. Weel, we’re no decided what we’re goin ta du da woarn, or wha is ta geng fur da tushkars. I wis tinkin meself, at—”

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

**The P. M. tries "dis golf" at Lerwick.**

"You were thinking?" enquired the Chairman of the P. M.

"Yiss, I wis goin ta say, whin dis twa dugs began ta fecht an interupid me, at I wisna aff o da toucht o goin ta Lerrick mesell."

"That's hardly necessary, surely. Your time is too valuable to waste on a special journey for a few tushkars."

"Weel, of coorse da moarn is a sort o a holiday fur da crood, an a kind o a makkin ready fur da sittin on Tuesday. I hae naethin ta mak ready meself, an dir nothin parteeklar ta du at hom. Forby, I don't tink da boy himself wid ken whaar ta fin da man at hes da tushkars, so I'm come ta da conclusion at I'll hae ta go alang wi him, ta mak sure we get da richt eens."

"Well, since the motor has to go to fetch the tushkars here for Tuesday's sitting, there is nothing to prevent you accompanying the boy."

"I am inclined to think," put in Mr D., "that the petrol consumed will cost more than the tushkars. Besides, they are really not necessary for the sitting."

"My dear sir, you misunderstand the situation. It's a rule in all Government Departments, as firmly fixed as the laws of the Medes and Persi-

ans, that if a thing is wanted, the question of cost is never taken into consideration. The point—the only point—is, is the thing or article wanted ? should it be got ? is it better to have it ? Now, in my view, as I have said, the tushkars should be here ; therefore they must be brought here.”

“ Yiss, I tink da tushkars sood be here. At laest, dir nae use lyin in Lerrick ; an da boy an mesell can aesy rin doon fur dem.”

“ Are you taking any of the ladies with you ? ” enquired Mr C.

“ Na, no dis time. I tink we’ll geng wirsells. Dir a bit o a budder, dis weemen, sometimes, ye kno. Dey winna be in paece, an dir aye wantin somethin, an I’m spent plenty, an ower muckle, already. So I tink we’ll geng wirsells. We can set oot aboot half-past ten, an be back in plenty o time at nicht.”

“ Ah, here’s the ladies ; and the motors are waiting outside. Now, then, we’ll set off. Mrs Laurenson, you must come with me. I must see you safe home myself. You must be tired after all you’ve gone through.”

“ I’m been mair tired mony a time, fur croftin wark is no da aesist a body can tink o. Ye’re very kind, I’m sure, ta tink sae muckle aboot da laek, o me. Da warst is I hae little ta offer you whin we get ta wir hom.”

“ Don’t mention such a thing. We already have had all that we need for this night. All we want is a run in the pleasant evening, and to see where our Practical Member and his good wife and bairns live.”

"It's no muckle ta be seen, I assure you ; but it's aa we hev an aa we're hied, aa my life."

"Your goodman is going to Lerwick to-morrow, I understand."

"What's he gaen ta Lerrick fur ?"

"Well, you know, he left there the three tush-kars which he purchased for the Commission, and he considers it a matter of honour that he himself should see that they are here. Therefore he considers he should go along with the boy and bring them."

"Weel, I raelly see no need for dat at aall. Bit dat's juist laek him. If he taks a thing in haand, he maun see aa aboot it himsell. I hoop you'll keep doon ipun him, fur he's juist ower muckle inclined ta tak his ain wye. No at he means ill, ye ken. Bit dat's juist da wye o him."

"My dear Mrs Laurenson, instead of we keeping down, as you call it, upon Mr Laurenson, it's he, I assure you, who looks after and keeps down upon us to a very large extent. You see, his knowledge of practical affairs is so wide and varied, and he has such a large vein of shrewd sense, that with his fund of never-failing humour and kindly ways, he has made us all cherish the warmest feelings as well as respect for him."

"Oh yae, I ken at Jirry hes sense in some wyes ; bit in idder wyes he hes non at aall. He's ower slippid sometimes."

"Well, but, you know, no man is perfect here below. It would be a strange world if we were all perfect, wouldn't it ? There would be no room for development. As the old lady said, 'It takes

a lot of people to make a world.' Now, you are safely in. Then off we go."

"I wiss wi dis fine nicht at it wis sixty instead of six miles we hed ta go, an I tink bi da look o her, Betty tinks da sam. Gie me a good-goin pipe an a clear rod, an no sheep an no gates, an I'll sit in a motor fur a braw while. Fine things dis motors. Heth, we're no far fae da hoose already, an we'll shune be dere."

Within twenty minutes of the time the motors left the hotel, they were at the P. M.'s residence. Betty was handed out "laek a leddy," but to her request to come in, the members of the Commission politely made the excuse that it was too late, and that they really must get back to the hotel.

Next morning at ten o'clock, the motor, which had fetched Jerry to the hotel,—he having been given certain hints by Betty before he left to look at some articles of furniture which she saw in the papers were for sale, since he was to be in the town—was standing outside the hotel door, all ready, spic and span, for another journey to the metropolis. The chaffueur was lolling about, smoking, anon looking to see if this were right and that and the other thing had not been left ; the imp, "as large as life and twice as handsome," was happy and radiant, for had not the Tittie given him one of her never-to-be-forgotten smiles at breakfast, and asked him to go along one of the chemists and purchase a certain kind of scent for her ? On this lovely morning, to him life was a pure joy. He was young ; his lady-love was kind ; he was going on a pleasant journey ; he had for a boy no incon-

siderable means ; his prospects were good — excellent. Life held out to him so many possibilities, and prospects of future happiness, that he felt, between the whiffs of his cigarette, he could go and embrace the old ewe that stood staring at him at no great distance. His dreams were somewhat rudely disturbed by the whole party emerging from the hotel, most of them without headgear, the gentlemen smoking, hands in pockets, and almost as full of the exhilaration of the morning as the boy himself.

“ Weel, we’re going ta get a fine day fur it, dat’s sure,” said the P. M. to Mr D.

“ Yes, you are. I think the weather in Shetland is very much like the little girl we were told about when we were young. ‘ When she was good she was very, very good ; and when she was bad, she was horrid.’ It appears to me that you can make very fine as well as very bad weather up here.”

“ We can. We hae some very fine days, an some very bad eens, I can tell you. Bit da fine days is fine, and dis is wan o dem. Weel, I suppose we’ll better get in an’ mak fur it. Weel, Jaikie, hes du gotten plenty o yon pushen cigarettes ? ”

“ Any number.”

“ So, I hae plenty o baccy too, an—an—, an—a ; yiss. Noo dan, folk, don’t tak ill till we come back wi da impliments. You could occipee your time bi goin aboot da perish tellin da folk aboot da sittin da morn, juist ta stretch your legs laek. What’s yon da Tittie is sayin, boy ?

Shu's spaekin ta dee. Somethin about ' don't fur-get ! ' "

" Oh, I know," the boy answered, his face suffused with a rapturous smile.

" Weel, I can tell dee dis, my boy," said the P. M. as the motor moved off to the cheers and handkerchief-waving of the assembled crowd, " at if du gets da laek o her, du'll du weel. Shu's a perteeclar lass, I can tell dee, is da Tittie, an it'll be nae smaa drink it'll get her," to which opinion the boy heartily subscribed, inwardly slapping himself on the chest and saying " I am the chosen man."

For a few miles silence reigned in the motor. The imp was engrossed with his pleasant thoughts, and was casting about in his mind what little offering that would be acceptable he could bring from Lerwick to lay on the shrine of his goddess. Jerry was also troubled about the " eternal feminine," but in a different way. " I don't kno about dis idee o Betty's at aall. Shu's tasted blod in more wyas as wan, I see. Shu got a lot o rewhirements, as shu caad dem, i da wye o dress, as my pocket kent, an noo su's efter furnatir. Weel, if shu wance begins wi dat, He alon knos whin shu'll stop. Shu'll be gaen ta set up a new hoose, I widna winder, efter we're hed a bit o a hom fur naar forty year. What wis it shu caad yon thing agen ? A chiffonier ? What's Betty goin ta du wi a chiffonier ? An what is a chiffonier ? I suppose I'll get ta know whin I see it. So. I see wan thing. Dir plenty o rods fur da money ta go."

" Ever done anything at golf ? " asked his



young companion, as the motor came in sight of Mangister.

"Golf? Is dat yon thing at dey caa a game whaar men, an weemen tu, tries ta pit a peerie baa in a peerie hol?"

"That's the gafe, and a glorious game it is too."

"Fur glorious I kno not; bit certainly it looks da heicht o foally. Ta see sensible folk toilin an slavin ta strik a bit o a baa at dey miss aftener as dey hit, an aetin dir sowsls oot ta pit it inta a hol at dey canna see, an wastin hoors every day on da job, an as prood as peacocks whin dey get da baa in, is really mair as ony sensible person at hes ta wirk can understand."

"That may be; but look to the fresh air and exercise they get."

"Weel, dat's both rewhired, certainly, per-teeklarly fur da folk at wirks inside; bit raelly I could never see ony sense in yon golf at aall. Why canna dey walk if dey want exercise an fresh air?"

"Because walking itself does not exercise the brain as well as the body. Golf exercises everything—body, brain, eye, and hand, at the same time. It is better even than billiards."

"Oh, if it's better as billards, or half as gude, dan it most be somethin wirt. I never got dat red baa doon yet. I winder if we could hae a try da day."

"I don't know. I was thinking we might have a shot at golf to-day. I am feeling rather stiff for want of a game. I am a member of the

Club here, and we can easily go up to Annsbrae and have a game."

"Weel, I hae nae objectins. We'll be i da toon afore wan o'clock, an efter we hae a bit o denner, we could go an hae a try. What aboot da implimints, though ? "

"Oh, I have plenty of clubs for both. You only need four."

"Fower clubs, ta pit wan baa in a hol ? "

"Yes, sir, you need them all, as you will find."

A pleasant lunch at the Grand put the P. M. and the boy in the best of humours. While the youth was away for the clubs, Jerry had a look-in at the billiard room after he had lit his pipe. He could not resist the temptation to try putting down the red, and was so engrossed in the effort that he did not notice that the boy was standing almost at his side watching him.

"Now, golf is the game to-day ; not billiards. We'll have to go. Splendid time just now ; nobody about, and the weather lovely."

"I suppose we will. Hes du gotten aa da clubs, as du caas dem ? "

"They're all here, in this bag."

Arrived at the first tee at the Annsbrae course, the game began.

"Golf is very like billiards," said the boy, as he flung down the bag. "Very easy when you can do it."

"I mak nae doot."

"You place the ball so, grasp the club so, and play so."

"Man, I never saw onything as aesy-lookin

as dat in mi life," said the P. M., as the ball like a bird gracefully rose and flew over the wall.

"Oh, easy ! Just a little practice, that's all. Now, you try. Take the driver in both hands like this, and lay the ball just in front, so, and give her sheet ; put every ounce of strength you have in your body in the stroke. But keep your eye on the ball. Don't forget that."

Following the instructions as well as he could, the P. M. made his first attempt. The main thing that lay in his mind was the injunction to "give her sheet." This he was determined to do, for he considered it would be "a aafil dooncome" if he didn't drive the ball at least as far as the boy. Grasping the club firmly, and placing the ball where he was told was the proper place and distance away, he lifted the club and brought it down with terrific force. Of course as he did so he shut his eyes, and therefore failed to keep his eye on the ball. However, he thought he had done splendidly. He looked towards the dyke after the stroke, and said—

"Whaar did shu go ? Whaar is shu ?"

"Where is she ? She's lying where she was."

"Loard save my sowl ! Boy, dis is not da sam baa, shurly."

"The same ball, I assure you. Did you keep your eye on it as you brought the club down ?"

"Weel, I wid not juist say. Maybe I blinkid. Bit I gave her sheet."

"Oh yes, you gave something sheet, but not the ball. What you have to do is simply to sweep

the ball off the ground without touching anything else ; make the club strike it in the proper place at the right moment. It's very simple. Try again."

" I'll strik her dis time ; I'll mak sure o dat."

Again grasping the club, Jerry again brought it down with terrific force. Providence intervened to save the boy from being killed on the spot, for the head of the club, which had struck the ground in front of the ball, just passed within a few inches of his face on its road towards the lower dyke.

" Dat did him, I tink."

" Yes, it nearly did for me ; and that's seven and-six gone. You've got to strike the ball, not the earth ; and golf clubs are made to strike with, not to smash. The ball is still lying where it was."

" Boy, dis is aafil wark," ruefully exclaimed the P. M. as he surveyed the club handle minus the head. " I'll hae ta try some idder implimint."

" It is awful work—worse than casting peats, I should say. Try this cleek. See. Take the ball out here, and lay it up, and play it so."

" Man, da thing looks sae aesy, at I—I—I—I—don't kno why I canna strik it. Dis is a peerier club, an I tink I'll hae a better chance."

" Don't be too quick, now. Slow is the word. Half-a-crown gone," said the imp, with a sardonic smile, as the ball soared over the dyke into the sea.

" We play here over the ground ; not into the sea."

" Maybe ye du ; bit I struck da baa. I got her dat time. I'll juist stick ta dis club. Did du say yon baa wis lost?"

" Gone where the good niggers go. Price two-and-six."

"Weel, we canna help it. We hae ta play. Hes du ony mair baas?"

"Yes, there's a few here; but they'll soon go at this rate. Try another shot. Very good. Not bad. Now, then, get her over the dyke. Here's the club for that purpose."

With a resounding whack the P. M.'s ball bounded back from the dyke to about the middle of the park and rolled down within a foot of the side dyke.

"Ill trift wi dis daek. What's dis daek here fur? Wha is wantin dis daek here?"

"The dyke, my dear sir, is a hazard—a difficulty to be got over. It's not good for people to have everything easy and smooth in this world. You have to play the ball where it is lying. If you lift out, one is counted against you."

"I don't care if dey coont half-a-dizzen against me. Shu hes ta come oot o here afore I can play. So, I strak her again."

"You did, but she struck the dyke again. We want it over the dyke. Very near this time, though. Struck the top, and bounded into the sea. Two balls gone, and one club, and not one hole played. When will we get round the course?"

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

The P. M. runs up a score of 37 for the first hole at golf.

"Now, see here," said the boy, "this will never do. Take a fair and square chance, where you can hardly miss, and let us for goodness sake get at the other side of this blooming dyke. I'll drop this ball here, in front of the gateway, and if you hit it anything right it is bound to go through. This counts two more. You're now twenty-five."

"Dat's a braa lok, I tink. Hoo mony is du?"

"I'm one."

"Dan I'm twinty-fower ta da guid?"

"Twenty-four to the bad, my dear sir. In this game we count the opposite way from billiards. In billiards the player who piles up the highest score wins; in golf, the player wins who puts the ball in with the fewest number of strokes. Now, hit the ball gently, and send it through, so that we can get on. Take this club."

"Noo, it's juist yon club at did it. If du'd left me alon wi da idder implemint, shu wid a been ower. I dunna laek yon peerie club ava."

"Juist so. Weel, you'll better go back for the ball. It's lying near the tee, half-smashed. Put it in your pocket, and carry it through for mercy sake, for we'll stand here all day and never get on, at this rate. You're twenty-seven now. Now,

drop the ball here, and play for the lighthouse. The hole is in that direction. That's the Ness of Sound you played for, and the ball is nearly in the sea again."

"I never saa onything laek dis deevil's baas i mi life. Why could dey no made da thing mair da size o a billard baa, dan a body micht a struck it."

"Or a football? No, sir. This game demands science, skill, care, a quick eye and steady nerve. See how it's done."

"Boy, da Evil Wan is inta dee wi dis games," as by a beautiful lofting shot the imp laid his ball within a few yards of the pin. "What am I ta du noo."

"Lift out and play. See, I'll give you a good lie. You see the pin there?"

"Awa ower yonder?"

"Yes, but it's not so very far. About what we call a half shot."

"Half a shot or hael shot, I maun try an get wan guid strok as lang as dir nae faer o goin inta sea. Dat did her, I tink."

"Yes, dat did her a'll right. You're only fifty yards beyond the pin, and you'll have to play back again. By the time you're in, I expect your score will be on to forty."

"So; we canna help it. I'll go an varg away at her. I'll shurly get her in some time."

"Hillo, Jack, what are you doing here? I thought you were at Hillswick with the Peat Commission."

"Hillo, Annie, is this you? Where's thing-a-me-jig? How are you playing alone?"



"My partner did not turn up, and I am just having a round all by myself. But I thought you were so engrossed with your duties in the Peat Commission that golf could never enter your head. And golf at Lerwick too. My word, there's nothing like a Government job, if you want to enjoy life. Who is this you're playing with?"

"This is the P. M. himself."

"What? The P. M.? The famous P. M.? Please, Jack, introduce me. I am dying to meet Mr Jeremiah Laurenson."

"Heth, if a boanie lass laek you is dying ta meet a aald man laek me, what state will ye be in ta meet a guid-luikin young een, I wid laek ta ken," said the P. M., who at that moment came up to the green, after his tenth attempt to get the ball there.

"Mr Laurenson, I'm just delighted to meet you. I have read so much about you and enjoyed the story of all the ongoings of this Peat Commission, that I feel as if I had known you all my life. What a bright time you are having. I hope you keep a tight hold on this youth. He's inclined to get out of hand. How was the Tittie, as you call Miss F., when you left Hillswick."

"Oh, shu wis fine. Coortin a bit, ye ken, laek aa da lasses, gled ta hae da men aboot her, to torment. A fine lass, da Tittie, I assure you, as mair as wan o da lads tinks," the P. M. replied, with a shrewd glance in the direction of the boy, who blushed violently and tried to hide his confusion by vigorously flicking at a daisy with his cleek.

"Oh, ho-o-oh? Is that the way the wind

blows? She is a charmer, I know; and I can hardly tell the number of men she has already bowled over. I don't know if the Apollo has yet come along, though, who has been able to make her heart like water."

"I tink bi aa at I can mak oot, at shu's kind o thaain, at ony rate. Dir wan chap—

"Oh, come along, for goodness sake, and stow this bunkim you've got in your heads. Are you going to join us, or are you going on your self?"

"I'll be glad to join you, very glad indeed to have a game of golf with such a famous person as the P. M. You're in such an angelic temper that it will be a pure delight to be along with you. Have you written any verses to the Tittie yet? You're a great hand at poetry."

"Oh, shut up."

"Bov, du's no ta spaek ta da young leddy laek yon. Na, as fur da tree o wis playing tagedder dat's oot o da whestin. I tak at we're been da maist o a hoor yargin an vaglin ta get here, da twa o wis; an if tree set tu, we'll not be don i da creation o man. Ye can play, an I canna; so da best ye can du 'ill be fur ye twa ta geng tagedder, an I'll staand by an see fair play. Bit ye most beat him."

"Beat him! That's impossible. He's a demon at this game."

"Heth, he seems ta be a demon at aa games. I don kno hoo he'll come aff wi da coortin een, though. Dat's sometimes very aesy, an sometimes awfil difficult. An it's no practice at alwis wins dat game. Sometimes dem at hes da most practice misses da mark aatagedder."

"Come away. Are you going to stand here talking all day. Let us do something, for any sake."

"Thank you, Mr Laurenson. If you will be so good as to carry my clubs, I will try a few holes with this Adonis; but as for beating him, there is not the slightest chance."

"Don't you say dat. Mony is da strong man at's been laid low bi a waek woman."

"That's in another way, though."

"Nae doot. Bit we'll see. Noo, come awaa an begin."

Down to the second tee the trio went, Miss Annie of course had the honour, and drove a very nice ball nearly up to the well.

"Weel don you, my jewel. Ye can play, I can see dat."

The imp, however, with a fine graceful motion, and with little or no effort, drove his ball well up the valley, where it lay in a cup on the other side of the ditch.

"Boy, da deevil sit ithin dee—I mean, beggin yere parding, miss, dis boy never misses nothin. He's shurly naar da hol."

"Yes, but he's not in yet. There's many a slip between the cup and the lip, you know. But everything is in his favour. However, we'll try all we can."

A clean, well-aimed run up placed Miss Annie as near the hole as Jack, and in a better position but of course one down.

"Noo, Jaikie, it's dee ta play, I suppose. Dir twa rods ta Scallowaa, du kens."

Whether it was the P. M.'s remarks, or his own suppressed anger at his opponent's remarks, or whatever the reason, Jack foozled his shot, and instead of it dropping on the green, as he meant, the ball rolled into a part of the ditch which made playing out very awkward.

"Da sword of the Loard an Gideon—I mean, wir side fur ever," exclaimed the P. M., in great excitement. "Noo, my daatie, juist shove du da baa ita da hol, an he's don fur."

"Easier said than done, my friend. But there is a chance now, I see."

"Well don Maria! Well don Jacobina!" came in jubilant tones, as the ball lay within a foot of the hole.

"Noo, me boy, if du baets dat, I'll say some-thin fur dee."

A masterly stroke placed Jack's ball within a few inches of the other.

"A beautiful shot that," said Miss Annie. "An awkward lie, and well brought out. Now, if I just have nerve to put this down,—"

"Pit it doon, fur mercy sake. Dunna miss noo, in ye sae near. Noo, tak care. Dere's a peerie bit o straw at I'll better tak away."

"Shu's doon! Shu's doon! Hurray! Ye're don him. Fower stroaks. Dat's shurly extrea gude."

"I'm not done him yet, though. He has the chance of a half."

And a half Jack made it.

"Weel, ye're as gude as him, onywy, wi dis hol, so he hes nothin ta say."

“Noo at da game is don, couldna ye come ta da hotel an hae a cup o tea wi wis afore we geng hom?”

“Thank you, I can do that. I have one or two messages to send to my friend Miss F., which you might take, if you will.”

“I’ll be only ower gled ta obleege you. Hoo did you say the game wis?”

“Oh, he won. I was three down. We halved two, and he won the other three. I am very proud, I assure you, I did so well.”

“Weel, weel, ye’ll maybe baet him yit. He’s shurly don nothing bit play games fae da time he wis boarn, dis boy. Noo, here we ir. I’ll lat da folk ken at dir a leddy wi wiz. Da tae ’ill shune be ready, an efter dat we’ll hae ta be setting oot.”

When the tea was about halfway through, Jack, who had not forgiven Miss Annie for her teasing, and was rather taciturn, remarked—

“What about the chiffonier, by the way?”

“Merciful Fader,” ejaculated the P. M.

“And the tushkars?”

“Dear wan! Boy, dat’s dee again. Dis golf is don it, da sam as da billards. Weel, hom ithoot da tushkars I may go; bit ithoot wurd o da chiffonier I durst not. Betty wid tak mi head off. I most see aboot da piece o furnatir.”

From the explanations given in reply to her enquiries, Miss Annie learned that the errands for which the motor run had been made had been entirely neglected.

“What’s ta be don? Da place ’ill laeklv be shut bi dis time.”

After a good deal of hunting about, a view of the chiffonier was obtained and the price—£7 17s 6d—ascertained. The tushkars, too, were ferretted out, although the maker was not more than pleased to be taken from his tea for the purpose of handing them over. After this had all been satisfactorily accomplished, and after Miss Annie's various messages, verbal and otherwise, had been given to the P. M., the pair started for home, that individual remarking, as he sat down in the motor, that "von Miss Annie wis muckle ipu da sam build as da Tittie, bht harly sae neat, an no sae sweet"—a sentiment to which his companion most heartily, though inaudibly, subscribed.

The journey home was dull and uneventful. The imp, occupied with his own thoughts, lay curled up at one side of the motor, his arms folded across his chest, and was clearly not in a talkative frame of mind. Even to Jerry's enquiry if he had got the Tittie's errand, he merely responded with the two words "You bet!" and immediately relapsed into a silence which he only broke by monosyllabic responses to the P. M.'s attempts at conversation.

"He's shurly tinkin heavy aboot da Tittie, or tryin ta mak a bit o poetry aboot her, as Miss Annie wis sayin. I widna winder. Da bov is got what dey caa da electric spark in him, ye kno, da sam as I hed mesell whin I wis young. An I kno at dis makin o poetry taks some tinkin. I mind mony a time whin I wid be hom fae wan or idder o da fishins or da sea, at I wid go ben whin I toucht dir wis a shance o a coarn o paece, an try an write doon twar-tree things at hed com i mi head. Bit maistly every



time, juist whin I hed gotten mi head back ower i da shair, an kind a nunin da wirds an wis juist beginnin ta set dem doon, in wid come Betty wi 'Jirry, does du no hear da calf bruilin fur his maet?' or 'Jirry, du's no flittin da kve;' or 'Jirry, da kye is i da coarn;' or 'Jirry, da dug is rinnin efter da sheep;' or 'Jirry, wan o da lambs is faen ower da banks,' or some idder deevilrv o dat kind. Deevil tak da baand, mony a time I said, Loard forgie me; bit raelly, ye kno, it wis vexin, juist whin a body wis gotten i da frame o mind ta write doon some boanie things, ta be everlastingly inter-rupid aboot da calf an da coo, an aa da rest at's aboot a croft. I kno mony a line hes been lost juist dat wye, fur want o time, fur you mann hae some paece, ye kno, afore ye can pit doon poetry. Betty juist used ta come buxin in ipu da middle o every line I hed i mi head, so I never got a hael een feen-ished, not wan; an dat wye I never got da rhyme pairt, ye see. Poor sowl Burns, I kno he hed mony a twist afore he got aa at he wrot set doon, fur he hed ta wirk aboot a fairm. He didna mak sic a job o da fairm as he did o da poetry, though. Bit no man can du twa things extree weel at da sam time. Da wan is puin wan wye an da idder is puin da idder, an atween da twa da man is broken. Lest wyas, dat wis da wye wi Burns, wi aa I'm read aboot him. It's maybe a mercy at Betty an da bairns an da sea an da croft an da animals is keepid me fae being wan o dis poets; for fae aa at I can mak oot, da maist o dem hes hed a poor life o it. Noo, Jaikie, mi boy, du'll hae to be waakenin up noo; we're near hom. Du's shurly gotten a fine bit o



poetry made fur da Tittie be dis time. Du's no spoken muckle, at ony rate. Hillo, Ertty, is yon dee," roared the P. M., as the motor rushed by, the hotel just coming into sight.

As Ertty jumped to one side to keep clear, and recognised his old friend, he muttered to himself as he stood for a moment looking after the retreating vehicle—

"Faith, Lowra wisna far wrang. Dir nothin laek dis Govermint jobs. I see dat. Guid pay, an little ta do. Shu wis a peety, boys. I kno at Lowra could howld her owen as da wife o wan o a Govermint crood as weel as Betty Laurenson, ony day an ony place."

And Ertty proceeded on his journey, digging his staff deep into the earth at every step, meditating, as many another has done, how things in this world are so frequently topsy-turvy, and for the most part, apparently at "sixes and sevens."

Meantime, the motor reached the hotel, where an excellent supper and a warm welcome awaited the fatigued and weary travellers.

## CHAPTER XL.

**The P. M. is "waakened oot o his soond sleep bi somebody singin  
below his bedroom window."**

IN the early hours of next morning the P. M. awoke, or rather was roused from his slumber by what to his confused senses seemed to be a peculiar kind of caterwauling near his bedroom window.

"It's no affen I get da nightmare," he said to himself, when the sounds first broke on his ear. "We hed a guid supper da streen, richt anof, bit I didna tak sae muckle as ta mak me restless. It's been yon sheese, shurly. Yit, man, yon's no da soond o cats eddern. It's mair laek da soond o somebody trying ta sing. Loard guide me, wha is singin at dis time o nicht?"

Sitting up in bed, the P. M. listened intently.

"Faith, it's Maikie; it's da boy. He's singin a sang ta da Tittie, da sam as da young billies did lang ago at we read aboot. Whin I wis coort-ing Betty, heth I didna staand ootside an sing at her window. Not I. It's no very comfortable on a winter nicht, an I see no sense in it at aall. It only waakens folk oot o dir soound sleep. I gude inside. Dis 'il be da thing at he was makin ipu da rod yesterday. Bit hoo is he come ta my window? Poor sowl, he's sae anxious at he's mistaen da bedroom; dir awfil alaek fae da ootside. What's he sayin? What's yon?"

Who is Sylvia? what is she,  
That all our swains commend her?  
Holy, fair, and wise is she,  
That heavens such grace doth lend her,  
That adored she might be;

“Min, dat’s no bad. He’s don very weel fur a bit o a boy.”

“That ad-o-o-o-red she-e-e might be.”

“So so, boy, dunna burst deesell, min. Tak care o dee trot. Yon’s a heich not yon adored een; hard ipu da craig.”

Is she kind, as she is fair?  
For beauty lives with kindness—

“No, no, mi boy, du’s wrang dere, entirely. Beauty doesna alwis live wi kindness at aall. Far from it. Da kindest woman at ever I kent in mi life hed a face da very eemage o wan o wir owld yows. Oh, shu wis ugly, poor sowl, dat shu wis, ah, bit shu wis kind. Shu never got a man; na, na; no, no. Oh, bit shu wis da kind aboot bairns! an caad dem daatie, an jewel, an tittie, an joy, an floer, an everything at she could tink o. An wid a dune a good turn ta ony body. Yiss, an I’m seen more as wan or twa eddern o dat sam kind. Beauty an kindness doesna alwis geng tagedder, mi boy; an whidder du says or tinks it deesell, or du’s saying what some idder body is said, ye’re makin a mistak, a big mistak.”

To her eyes doth love repair  
To help him of his blindness;  
And, being help'd, inhabits there.

Then to Sylvia let us sing,  
That Sylvia is excelling;  
She excels each mortal thing  
Upon the dull earth dwelling.  
To her garlands let us bring.  
To her ga-a-a-rlands le-e-t us bring.

“ So, so—, boy ; so. He’s gotten ipu da heich not again, an he’s never laek ta slip her. Weel, does du kno, I’m rael soary fur dee. Da Tittie is not heard wan wird ; du’s poored it aa oot i da aers o a aald man at wis mair needin his sleep as ta listen ta poetry. He most be rael bad at he’s taen ta dis, fur he most a kent at dis singin wis laekly ta waaken some o da folk i da hoose. Bit da young hert, ye kno ; da young hert. It tinks ipun nothin, an faers nothin. He’s shurly gon. Lat me see.”

Getting up and looking out the P. M. saw no traces of the love-stricken youth. He had silently glided away. But stuck in the sill of the window he saw a piece of paper fluttering in the zephyr-like breeze which fanned his face as he gazed out on the quiet landscape.

“ He’s left somethin written doon. ‘ To the adored.’ Dear wan. He’s not even closed da envelop, he’s been in sic a piperation. What is dis, noo. Lat me see.”

O, were I on Parnassus hill,  
Or had o’ Helicon my fill,

That I might catch poetic skill  
To sing how dear I love thee.  
But Nith maun be my Muses' well  
My Muse maun be thy bonnie sel',  
On Corsicon I'll glower and spell,  
And write how dear I love thee.

By night, by day, at field, at hame,  
The thoughts o' thee my breast inflame;  
And ay I muse and sing thy name,  
I only live to love thee.  
Tho' I were doom'd to wander on  
Beyond the sea, beyond the sun,  
Till my last weary sand was run,  
Till then—and then I love thee!

“ He does very weel, dis boy, mind you. Bit  
I tink I'm read dis somewye afore. What's dis  
idder een ? ”

She walks in beauty, like the night  
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;  
And all that's best of dark and night  
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;  
Thus mellowed to that tender light  
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,  
Had half impaired the nameless grace  
Which waves in every raven tress,  
Or softly lightens o'er her face;  
Where thought serenely sweet express  
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,  
So soft, so calm, so eloquent,

The smiles that win the tints that glow,  
But tell of days in goodness spent;  
A mind at peace with all below,  
A heart whose love is innocent.

“Min, da boy hes it in him, I see dat. Yon’s weel pitten tagedder, rael weel. Heth, da Tittie micht du waur as tak ta da boy; alto, of coorse, if he’s gaen ta be a poet, an nothin else, I widna say muckle fur da aernin. Na; poetry is richt anof in it’s place; bit it’s not fur keepin a faimily on. Heth, I tink I’ll better lay me atween da sheets an hae a coarn o sleep. I sall gie da dociments ta da Tittie i da moarnin.”

. . . . .

The breakfast table next morning was a scene which did one’s heart good to look at. The sun was streaming into the room, making the snowy tablecloths dazzling in their whiteness; and, glancing from the silver utensils, threw its beams into every corner. The company, well dressed, well groomed, pleased with each other and at peace with all the world, rejoicing in the fine weather, happy in being alive, ready for their appetising breakfast, greeted each other heartily and joyously; and when at last they all sat down, a brighter deil’s dozen of human being would not have been found in the three Kingdoms. The ladies had each donned a new and stylish blouse, and were looking very bright.

“We will have to take a good breakfast, ladies and gentlemen,” said the Chairman. “We have an arduous and trying day before us, you must

all remember. This will be the second occasion on which we have sat as a Commission."

"Ir we juist sitten wance? Is dat aa at we're don fae we startid?" asked the P. M.

"We have just sat officially once, certainly; but that is not to say we've done nothing. Far from it."

"Weel, what ir we don?"

"What have we done? We have done a very great deal. We have had a secular concert, attended a cattle sale, had a sitting in the church, flayed peat banks, been ill, and happily restored to health, had a sacred concert, met your good wife, are now making ready for another sitting, and preparing to go to a wedding. You have been twice in Lerwick, where, according to all accounts you wasted your substance like the Prodigal Son, and there left the implements necessary for the proper carrying-out of our remit; nearly lost your Benjamin; tore up the cloth of a billiard table; and have now taken to playing golf. The question is, not what we have done, but what have you done?"

Jerry was not prepared to have the tables so neatly turned upon himself, nor to hear the hearty and unanimous laugh which the Chairman's sally evoked. He felt guilty to a certain extent, but not altogether, and endeavoured to get himself out of the position which the Chairman had so cleverly placed him.

"Weel, it wisna my faut at ye widna get on wi da wark. Ye said dey wir nae hurry, an ye cooldna move here, an ye cooldna move dere fur



da wadder, and dis an dat. An it wisna my faut at ye laid you ta your beds efter ye hed made a most horrible mess o guid moor tryin ta flay it. I flayed mi bank an cuist her tu; an whin dir wis nothin ta du I guid ta Lerrick, certainly, fur twar-tree earands. Bit afore I guid, I pirposed ta Miss F. at I sood howld da sittin meself, ta get da wark troo; bit shu said dat wid never do at aall. What could I do bit wait intil ye got better an wir able ta kerry on? I'm wasted no time. I'm filled up da time, bit I'm wasted non. I'm been on da move aall da time, an as ready fur da wark noo as I wis at da beginnin."

"You have more knowledge of billiards and golf now than you had before, however," said Mr D.

"My knowledge o edder wan or da idder is no very great, an it's no laekly I'll laern muckle noo. I'm not been laek some folk, ye see, at's played billiards an golf aa dir lives, an some o dem don little else."

The Tittie, who saw that the conversation was taking a rather dangerous turn, here interposed with—"Oh, Mr Laurensen, I forgot. Here's a letter that came for you yesterday. I think it's from home."

"Yiss, I see dat. It's laekly fae Betty, alto it's addressed bi Mary. An bi-da-bye, yiss, yiss (fumbling in his pocket), I forgot tu; I hae somethin ta gie ta you. I faun dis i-i-i-i da sill o mi window dis-dis moarning aboot twa o'clock. Some fule cam under my window an bruiled an sang fur aboot ten meenits, somethin about Sylvia an

adored. An whin I got up ta look fur da objec, he wis away, clean gon. Dan I fann dis envelop, addressed 'To the Adored.' Noo, it cooldna be meent fur me. I don't kno o onyeen at adores me, accept wir dug, maybe; an of coorse it's not da wye o dugs ta sing below windows an mak poetry. So I toucht, ye see, at it wis some o dis men at wis taen a notion o you an hed mistaen my bedroom fur yours, an hed taen dis ould wye o lattin ye ken, ye see, an left dis, ta lat you understand."

"Ah, hah," said the Chairman. "A Romeo and Juliet? Who is the Romeo? We have a shrewd guess as to the Juliet—the Adored."

The boy, who was sitting at the far end of the table, flushed to the roots of his hair, and nearly choked on the cocoa he was in the act of drinking when the P. M. made his announcement. The Tittie, completely taken aback, tried in vain to hide her confusion in being thus publicly shown to be the lode-star of some distracted male, by glancing over the poems and saying.

"Nonsense. Utter nonsense. This is not meant for me. I never saw the writing in my life. It must be meant for you," handing the missives to the high-heeler.

"Here's a how-do-you-do! Here a pretty kettle of fish," said Mr C. "Love epistles knocking about and no one accepting ownership. What will you do now, ladies? Fight over the youth, or—"

"I pirpose at dey tak wan a-piece—I mean o da poems, fur nobody kens wha exactly dir meent fur; an dan try an fin oot wha sent dem. If dey're

baith in love wi him, heth, dey'll maybe baith hae ta tak him. We're comin back ta da Abraham an Solomon days, you kno, dat's sure; an I wid strongly advise ony lass at hes even half a shance, ta mak da most o it."

"And I propose that they should be put in the fire. Silly idiot, whoever he is," said the Tittie, "to imagine that Northmavine is Italy."

"Weel, weel, my jewel, your case be it. I toucht meself at da poems wisna bad, fur, do you kno, I may tell you, I read dem, caas da envelop wisna closed. Whaar's da boy? Heth, I widna winder bit what it's him."

"I'll boy him, when I get hold of him," said Miss F. "He'll get a piece of my mind, if he has been such a complete ass."

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, that has been a most interesting and enjoyable little episode. It shows that even a prosaic Peat Commission is not immune from Cupid's darts, and that these darts, sharp as ever, pierce the armour even of those engaged in serious national work. Which reminds me, now that breakfast is over, we will all have to get ready for our second sitting in the church, which begins at eleven o'clock sharp."

## CHAPTER XLII.

### Second Sitting of the Commission.

THE second sitting of the Peat Commission took place under auspicious conditions. The members of the Commission were all in excellent fettle; the weather was bright; and a large number of people had turned out to take part, either as listeners or as witnesses, in the proceedings. It matters not at what season of the year, at what hour of the day, or in what conditions of weather a Commission hold sittings in Shetland, if this Commission is dealing with the land, or with anything even remotely connected with the land, an audience, often a large one, is certain. And although this was a Commission which was dealing only with Peats, which can hardly be called a vexed question in Shetland, a great deal of interest was evinced among the people of Hillswick and vicinity in the doings of that body. Long before the hour, a fair crowd had gathered at or near the Church, mostly dressed in their Sunday best; and by the time the proceedings began, an audience which comfortably filled the building had taken their seats.

Some were amused, while others were shocked and scandalized, at seeing three tushkars prominently displayed, ranged round, below the pulpit.

“Lass, what is yon?” asked Betty Petrie,

who had on a well-worn tippet and a rather ancient bonnet, both of which had done their duty on many a Sunday, and whose hands bore evidence of a long acquaintance with peats and other crofting activities. "What ir dey goin ta du wi tushkars i da Hoose o da Loard? Yon's an aafil-lookin sight."

"Oh, I suppose," answered her neighbour, Meggy Taylor, "yon's ta lat da folk see at der sittin ta finn oot about paets. Bit raelly, it's my opinion dir a baand o fules—"

"Hist, lass, here dey ir."

At this moment the two clerks and two reporters entered the Church, and going up to a table in the choir, sat down and busied themselves by looking over papers and documents of imposing size and dimensions, every now and then passing remarks to each other. As the five Commissioners entered, shortly afterwards, the clerks and reporters rose up and remained standing until they had taken their seats. The remaining members of the Commission—the Literary Member, the lady typists, and the boy took their seats in a pew immediately in front of the choir.

The Chairman opened the proceedings by saying he was sorry that owing to unforeseen and untoward circumstances the sittings of the Commission had been interrupted. He was glad to say that the Commissioners, most of whom had been rather seriously indisposed for some days, were now restored to health, and were very glad to be able to resume their duties. This illness had been contracted in the discharge of their duties, through

their keen and earnest desire to obtain first-hand, accurate knowledge of the peat industry by practical experience; but although such a regrettable thing happened and might happen again, it would not deter the Commission from carrying out their important remit in the most thorough and painstaking manner. The Clerk would now call the first witness.

“Andrina Omand.”

“How,” asked the Clerk, “do you spell your name? Is it Andrina or Anderina—”

“A-n-d-e-r-i-n-a.”

“Take a careful note of that, gentlemen; it is very important,” said the Chairman. “The lady spells her name with an ‘e’.”

“And is it ‘Omand,’ or ‘Oman?’ Is there a ‘d’ in the surname?”

“O-m-a-n-d. Bit da folk juist says Oman.”

“Another important point to be noted. Exactness must characterise all our proceedings. Now, Miss Omand—I understand you are not married?”

“No, sir.”

“Will you tell us your precise age? How old were you last birthday?”

“Thirty-seven.”

“Fifty-seeven du means,” a voice was heard saying.

“It’s not true,” said Anderina, with a toss of her head and a flounce.

“Du wis boarn da year da whaals cam ta Ronis Voe, my Andereena, an dat wis juist fifty-seeven year ago dis very year.”

"Nothin o da kind."

"Order, please; order," said the Chairman.  
"The lady knows her own age, I presume."

"I don't believe shu does," came from another voice.

"You have been accustomed to work on a croft all your life?"

"Dat am I in truly."

"And in connection with the croft you have of course had a good deal to do with peats?"

"Yae, yae, ower muckle, as my back kens."

"Then we may take it that you have a large experience of peats."

"Dat you can."

"O a kind," a man's voice was heard to say, at which ejaculation Anderina turned round and glared in the direction from which the voice proceeded.

"You know all the operations required for making a peat ready for fuel?"

"I truly du dat."

"Please describe the various processes."

"Weel, first ye flay da bank, ye see; dan ye cast, dan ye raise, dan ye turn, dan ye roog, an dan ye kerry hom."

"Then of course you will have found throughout your long experience a good deal of difference in the quality of the moor?"

"Yae, yae, I'm truly don dat."

"How would you describe the various qualities?"

"Weel, dir black moor, as black as ink, ye kno;—dat's da best kind; dan dir a kind no sae



guid, kind a broonie an hedder; dan dir a kind o blackie an hedder; dan dir saft dirt—mossy paets; an dan dir horse flesh.”

“Horse flesh? Horse flesh in peat moor?”

“Yiss, dir a kind dey caa horse flesh.”

“How is it called by such a name?”

“I dunna ken, I’m sure.”

“Dat shaas aa at du kens aboot paets,” some one put in. “Da moor is caad horse flesh, woman, becaas it’s sae hard an tough ve canna get da tushkar troo it.”

“Order, please. This is interesting. There are then five varieties of peat moss usually come across. Take careful note of these facts, gentlemen. Five varieties. We are learning something now. Then does your experience extend so far as casting peats?”

“Oh, yae, yae; I hed to du dat.”

“Weemen canna cast paets.”

“Dat’s dee again, Lowrie Jaarmson, ill-spaekin craeter at du is. Weemen can cast paets. Mony is da bank I’m castn.”

“Yiss, sic laek as dey wir.”

“Another point we are anxious to elucidate, Miss Omand, is this. How many peats should an expert hand cast in a day of ten hours, the moor having been flayed?”

“I cooldna say dat, sir, I’m sure.”

“Perhaps two thousand?”

“I wid not laek ta say.”

“Well, take it this way. This is a very important matter, we must bear in mind, for until we can find the actual cost of peat, through all its

operations, until it is used for fuel, and then ascertain its value compared with coal, our labours are to a large extent in vain. Take it this way. A peat bank is about thirty yards long?"

"I cooldna say, sir."

"Yiss, aboot theerty yairds, an twa feet o cuttin moor," someone said.

"Well then," said the Chairman, "if we take a peat bank thirty yards long, with two feet of cutting moor, we can arrive at a definite number of peats of a certain size. Take it that the peat is six inches thick—or deep—and that nine are got out of the twenty-four inches of moor. Multiplying 30 by 6 and then by 9, we get 1620; and taking two peats out of the bank, we arrive at a total of 3240 peats. The question is, how long would it take an expert to cut this bank?"

"I'm don it in a day, an flayed da bank tu," another said.

"To err on the right side, then, we will say that a fair day's work of ten hours should produce 3000 peats. Now, then, we come to the question of cost. How long, Miss Omand, would you say a man should take to flay a bank of the size described?"

"I wid tink aboot tree hours."

"Very well. Three hours' work at say 8d an hour is 2s. Then 10 hours' work casting at 9d per hour—"

"Beggin your pardon, sir, wir men never got 9d a hoor, or onything laek it."

"No, perhaps they did not in the past. But things are different now. Put it at the figures I

stated. Flaying 2s, casting 7s 6d, together, 9s 6d. Then the cost of the moor."

"We never pay onything for wir moor, sir."

"That no doubt is true; but from what we can gather, others do; and it therefore has to be taken into account. Five shillings, I am told, is the price charged for a bank the size I am speaking of."

"Yiss, dat's what dey pay in Lerrick, fur moor some o it at's no wirt castin," said the P. M.

"That makes 14s 6d for moor, flaying, and casting 3000 peats. Then there are of course the other operations,—the raising, turning, and all the rest of it. Now, can you tell us precisely how long it takes a single individual to turn and raise the 3000 peats which we reckon an average workman will cast in a day of ten hours?"

"I raelly could not say exakly."

"Can you give us any idea?"

"Maybe twa days."

"A day an a half sood do it," Lowrie Jaarmson put in.

"Twa an a half, du means," said another.

"Now, here we are again. We have got information so far definite as to the fair cost of the first two operations—flaying and casting. But it seems to be difficult to ascertain the cost of raising. The time given varies from a day to a day and a-half to two days and a-half. This is where the work of the Commission is hampered and impeded. Without exact information regarding all and every operation, progress is impossible. No report can be of value unless everything relating to the costs

and fuel value of peats are definitely ascertained. In order that this may be done, I will adjourn this sitting for another week, and during that time institute enquiries and call more witnesses to give further evidence on this detail. This day week we will again meet, when I hope that precise information will be led before us."

"Dat can aesy be don. Dir plenty o banks lyin ready fur raisin," said the P. M. "We could set a woman ta du da wark, an fin oot hoo lang shu taks."

"Yes, that might be done. The difficulty, I imagine, will be to find a bank of the precise dimensions—30 yards by two feet," said the Chairman.

"Another difficulty arises," said the Vice-Chairman. "It may be no easy matter to find a bank with exactly 3000 peats on it ready for this operation."

"Yes, we are surrounded with difficulties. All we can do is to endeavour to surmount them. Fortunately, time is not pressing, and no doubt before the peat season is over, we will be able to get some data to go on. This day week, then, we meet again, at the same hour."

As the audience slowly and somewhat reluctantly rose to leave, remarks other than complimentary were made by more than one individual.

"Faith," said Lowrie Jaarmson, "if dis baand is goin ta go on laek dis we'll be aa in wir graves afore dey get onything don."

"Man, dat's what dey're oot fur," said Frankie Cluness. "Dey're a oot ta waste time an

draw money. Dey ir haein a glorious time o it wi dis fine wadder. Man, it'll tak dem twa mont ta fin da size o a paet, at dis rate. Dat's no fixed yet. Na, na, my Lowrie; we're not in it. Jerry is aa richt, though. He's faan on his feet aa richt."

As the members of the Commission emerged from the church, Ertz Maikomson, who along with Lowra, his wife, had as a matter of business as well as pleasure been present at the sitting, said to his better half, "Dere he is. Noo is dee shance. See if du can get a howld o him an spaek him."

Lowra, who had put on her best attire for the occasion, and had put in an aigrette of imposing dimensions in her bonnet and wore a pair of new black kid gloves, went towards the Chairman with some diffidence and heart-fluttering, for she did not know how he would meet her, or in what light he would view the proposal she meant to make. But Lowra had firmly fixed in her mind the adage "Never venture, never win." He could hardly slay her, and she meant to make the attempt.

Going very respectfully up to the Chairman, who was alone at the moment, and who was in his usual good humour, she said—

"Beggin your pardon, sir, I wis juist gain ta say, aboot da raisin o paets, ye ken—"

"Oh, you know about raising peats, do you?"

"O heth, I du dat; non better, fur I'm wirkid i dem aa mi life. Dey wir sayin i da Coort at dey didna ken hoo lang it took ta raise a bank."

"That was our difficulty, Mrs——"

"Maikomson, sir; Mrs Maikomson. My man

is Erthir Maikomson, a great freend o Mester Laurenson's, at's on da Commission.

"A personal friend of our Practical Member? the man whom we all esteem most highly. That in itself, Mrs Malcolmson, is a passport to our regards."

"Freends! Dir been laek bridders aa dir life, fae da time at dey wir bairns. Yiss, yiss, dat ir dey, truly. An as fur Mrs Laurenson,—Betty, as we caa her—wha kens her better as I, I wid laek ta ken? Not wan i da perish, fur Betty an me wis broucht up tagedder frae da time at we wir infants. Dir not a woman i da whole place at's better laekid, or wan at I tink more o, as Betty Laurenson, not wan, an I kno shu tinks da sam about me."

"A close friend of Mrs Laurenson, one who knows Betty as you do—for we all call her Betty and regard her with affection—has a very strong claim on our regard, Mrs Malcolmson, for they are a very worthy couple. Anything I can do will be most willingly done for the personal friends of Mr and Mrs Laurenson. You were speaking about the peat-raising question. Perhaps you were going to suggest that you might undertake yourself, or get someone to undertake the labour of raising the peats on a bank of the size we spoke of?"

"I could aesy du dat, sir."

"The whole point, Mrs Malcolmson, as you will readily appreciate, is to find a bank exactly 30 yards long, 2 feet wide of cutting moor, with precisely 3000 peats cast on it. That's the difficul-

ty, and I'm afraid it may be a serious one."

"Weel, dir wan thing at could be don, sir."

"A bank could be gotten an set aff o da size ye spack o, an a man set ta cast her, an anidder man could be set ta coont da number o paets up ta tree thoosan; an dan, whin dat's don, a woman could be set ta raise da paets an a man could be set ta see hoo lang shu took ower da job."

"Mrs Malcolmson, you have taken a load off my mind. I do not mind telling you that I was beginning to find the difficulty of solving these intricate problems regarding the peats a heavy mental strain. It seems so very difficult to obtain exact information—precise information, you know, about all the operations. Your suggestion is admirable."

"Dir juist wan thing aboot it, sir, ye michtna laek, if ye're pressed fur time. If da bank is ta be cassen it'll be tree weeks or a mont afore da paets is ready ta raise."

"That's quite immaterial, my dear madam—quite. We are searching after the truth, after facts, definite, demonstrable facts. Whether the quest be long or short, the truth has to be ascertained. I am very much obliged to for your valuable suggestion; and if there is anything within my power that I can do—"

"I was juist gaen ta mention aboot Erty."

"Yes, what about him?"



## CHAPTER XLIII.

**Lowra has a talk with the Chairman ; and afterwards with Ertie.**

"About Ertie, sir," replied Lowra to the Chairman, "I wis gaen ta say—keep doon, dug, wi dee; go away. I wis gaen ta say at Ertie is a graand haand i da paets. Dir not a thing, no, not wan eetemtation aboot paets, fae da takin o a bank til da paet is brunt, at Ertie doesna ken aboot. Yiss, an he kens aa aboot it better as most o da men i da place. I widna say he kens better as Jerry—I mean Mr Laurenson; bit I kno at he kens as weel, at ony rate, aboot flayin, an castin, an roogin. An as fur buildin a stack. Da folk aa say at wir stack is da best pitten up i da hale pairish."

"Yes, I daresay. No doubt your husband has an intimate knowledge of the peat industry, for probably he has been engaged in it every season all his life. But I fail to see what particular interest that has for me."

"Weel, it's dis wye, sir. Ertie an me is been winderin if he couldna help you some wye or idder."

"Oh, yes, he could give evidence before the Commission."

"Yiss, he could du dat, sir. Bit, beggin your pardin, ir dey paid fur da laek o dat?"

“No, no; there is no fee paid to witnesses. This is a matter of national service, you know.”

“I wis winderin, sir, if dir wisna laekly ta be a oopenin on da Commission fur wan laek Erty, at kens sae muckle aboot paets. Alto I say it mesell, Erty is a good sowl—as good as ever trampid disert. He never pits himsell forward; no, no. He juist gengs on in his ain whiet wye; bit he kens a lok aboot everything, I assure you, sir, an he’s weel respectid bi everybody, young an ould. An if dir wis a shance; if onyeen o da Commission wis ta geng aff, or took ill, or hed ta geng away, Erty wid be mair as willin ta du what he could.”

“I am sure, Mrs Malcolmson, there is no one whose services we would more gladly avail ourselves of than those of your good man. I have no doubt about his ability, whatever. As you understand, we have on the Commission already one practical member in the person of Mr Laurenson; and I can assure you that it is a rare thing on Commissions of this kind to have even one such member—two would be out of the question.”

“Widna you be aa da better, sir, fur twa laek Jerry an Erty, at kens sae muckle aboot da paets?”

“I don’t see the necessity. We are appointed, you must understand, not so much to learn or to be able to perform the various operations that go to the making of a peat, as to ascertain all that is to be known about peats—their cost and fuel value. You will see for yourself that in order to accomplish this, practical working is not so necessary as precise information. And if you have attended our sittings, you will have seen how

extremely difficult it is to get this precise information, even from people who have all their lives worked in peats. We have, for instance, not yet been able to state definitely the exact size of a peat."

"Weel, I'm not surprised at dat, sir, becaas, ye kno, paets is aa different sizes; an some o dis men—not da laek o Jerry or Ertty—cast dem baith sae thick an sae lang at dey can harly be used."

"There it is, you see. We have not as yet, as I say, overcome the initial difficulty of fixing the size, or even the average size, of a paet. And, as you yourself saw to-day, the difficulties seem to increase the further we go. When we came to the other operations—raising, turning, and—and—and—

"Roogin, sir."

"Rooging; that's the word. When we tried to ascertain the cost of these essential operations, the information tendered was so vague as to be very unsatisfactory. These are the reasons why we had to adjourn, and why we have had to adopt your very sensible suggestion to set people to perform the operations and others to ascertain the time taken. Now, you will again see that in all this, it is not so much practical knowledge that is wanted, as what I may call the judicial faculty—the ability to sift evidence, compare the various data furnished, to tabulate what facts can be ascertained, and thus arrive at a fair and just conclusion. Of course, Mrs Malcolmson, if such a thing happened that I found our labours would be seriously and unduly prolonged, owing to the diffi-

culties I have referred to, and I felt it necessary to divide the Commission into two bodies—one to go to another parish, the other remaining here—I would have the greatest pleasure in nominating your husband for the post of practical member on the other body.”

“Thank you, sir; thank you. I think it very laekly it ’ill tak you a good while ta fin oot aa at ye want ta ken.”

“It may, Mrs Malcolmson, it may. I would be very unwilling to split the Commission, for we are working now most harmoniously and pleasantly together. I see difficulties in the way of adopting such a course—several difficulties; and it will be the last thing I will do. But if I am driven to it, Mrs Malcolmson, you may take my word that Mr Malcolmson will not be forgotten.”

“Weel, I can only thank you, sir, fur what you’re said. You may depend ipun it, at Erty ’ill be ready at ony time. He’s juist hame noo, most o da year, fur he’s no able fur ony fishin noo, or hard wark. Good day, sir, an thank you very much.”

“In case, Mrs Malcolmson, of anything arising necessitating a call upon Mr Malcolmson, you had better leave your address with the Clerk.”

“I’s e du dat, sir. I’ll write it doon an send it in. Wir address is Swankitoft, Northmavine, ’ill fin wis.”

“Rather a peculiar name, Swankitoft, isn’t it?”

“It is, sir. I dunna ken hoo sic a name wis geen ta da place, fur dir nothin swanky aboot Erty.

Far from it. He's ower muckle da idder wye. Bit I'll send it in ta da Clerk, an dan he'll hae it doon."

"Do so, please."

As Lowra joined her husband after this conversation, he said—

"Weel, an what made du o 'im?"

"What made I o 'im? I made a guid lok o 'im, I can tell dee. I kno it wid a been a dim afore du wid a made onything o' him, or even tried."

"Never mind dat, woman. Da point is, what did du do?"

"What did I do? I laerned somethin, at ony rate."

"What did du laern?"

"What did I laern? I fan oot at dir a shance o dee gettin on da Commission. Dat's what I laerned."

"A shance, du says. Oh. Hoo dat, an whan?"

"Da shairman towld me if ever da Commission wis split up, wan half ta stay here an da idder ta geng ta Yall, whaar, Loard knos, dey hae plenty o paets, he wid pit dee ipun da wan at went ta Yall."

"Oh, dat is somethin, I most say."

"Yiss, it's somethin. It's a good somethin."

"An whin, my Lowra, does du tink dis 'ill happen?"

"Oh, dat's a thing at nobody can say. Da shairman himself couldna say. Bit it micht come, aboot ony time; an what du haes ta du is ta be ready fur it."

“Ready fur it? What more can I be ready as I im?”

“Dere du is agen. Dere du is. Aa dy life du’s don nothin bit aks, ‘What can I do?’ Loard, man, do somethin. If a thing doesna come ta dee, du most go ta hit, dat’s aall. Here am I, an not da first time, as He at made me knos, at’s hed to go an fin oot, an turn up, an rut, yiss, rut, fur somethin ta dee ta du, ta keep a ruf aboon wir heads an pit somethin ta aet in wir mooths.”

“Weel, I’m alwis don what I could, an keepid ye aa livin.”

“Yiss, du’s don what du could, or redder what du wid. Bit what’s it come till? We’re aa whaar we wir, buxin an vargin wi a croft, an Jerry an Betty Laurenson ridin in dir schariots.”

“Weel, weel, weel; we’re heard aa dis afore. What I wid laek ta ken is, whan is dis goin ta happen, an what am I ta du?”

“It micht happen nixt week, or nixt mont, or it micht never happen at aall. Nobody knos; bit folk haes ta be pirpared. Da first at du haes ta do whin du comes hom is ta go ta Willie Wishart an get measured fur a new strood o claes. Dat’s what du’s got ta do.”

“Weel, faith, I don’t kno hoo I’m ta pay fur a new strood o claes. Canna mi Sunday things do?”

“No, dee Sundeey things can’t do. Things at du’s hed an worn fur twinty-five year, shinin, every bit o dem laek a whisky bottle. No. Man what laek wid du look among yon jantry wi ould claes at sood a been heaved away years ago? Da

strood 'ill hae to be gotten; we'll pey fur it some wye. Da lasses an mesell is makin haps, an we can mak more, at 'ill aye pey fur da strood."

"Bit I toucht dat wis fur ye're nown things at ye wir makin."

"An so it wis. An need dir wis fur it. I'm juist hed wan new wincy frock i da last fower year, an fur da bits o bairns, dir not hed onything laek what dey sood a hed. No, no; it's toil, toil, moil, moil, in wir habitation. Bit we'll get ower it aesy anof if it sae be at du gets on dis Commission. Man, is du aware at Jerry Laurenson haes five hunder pound i da year, clear til himsell, an every hapny o expenses paid?"

"I don't believe it."

"Whedder du believes it or not, it's da Gospel truth. Five hunder pound i da year, ten pound every week, comin inta da hoose, is somethin. A person can du somethin richt wi da laek o dat. Nae winder at Betty an Jerry is up i dir cuddy."

"I'm seen nae upness edder wi wan or da idder."

"Na, of coorse du sees nothin. Du never did, an never will. Ony woman, at haes sense, can see wi half a eye, man, at Betty an da bairns is gettin different every day; an I don't winder at it. Bit never mind dat een noo. Da thing is fur dee ta get on da Commission as weel as Jerry. Whin dat's dunc, we'll kno what ta du wi da money. Dir juist wan thing I wid waarn dee aboot, if it sae happens."

"What's dat?"

"I believe if du ever got on at du wid tell dem



every eetimtation at du kent aboot paets."

"Weel, isna dat what dey wid want me fur?"

"Want dee fur! What is da use o taakin? Does du no hae da gumption ta see at da men is fur da maist pairt pirtendin. Dir been set aff bi da Governint ta fin oot aboot paets; bit is du sae simple as ta tink at dir goin ta burst demsells ower it? No, no. Catch dem. Da more days da more hapnies, my lamb. Dat's juist laek dee. Du alwis wantid ta du everything richt, an waste no time."

"Bit isna richt richt?"

"Maybe it is. Bit in a case o dis kind, du's got ta do as idders do. Draa dee money an go aboot laek a jantleman. An say as little as du can get aff wi. Dat's what du's got ta du."

As the pair reached the homestead, Ertly, after this lecture, was not sure in his own mind whether the advent of the Peat Commission in the parish had been an unmixed blessing. Already he had had to submit to two harangues from the wife of his bosom, who ever since the Commission had arrived had been in a "tirry-mirry," and, worst of all, her temper showed no signs of abating. Ertly foresaw, if this appointment did not come off soon, life would be harder than ever. For the sake of peace, therefore, he devoutly hoped that Lowra's consuming desire might be fulfilled. After dinner, in order to be prepared for eventualities, he took his stick in his hand, and with his dog at heel, hied over to Willie Wishart to get measured for the suit which Lowra said he must have.

. . . . .

The party at the hotel passed the day pleasantly. After lunch, golf absorbed the attention of the younger members; the others filling up the time with reading and conversation. Tea, and afterwards dinner, occupied their activities till about nine o'clock, the only work done after the sitting being the transcribing and typing of the notes of evidence.

"You're no lookin very bricht," said the P. M. to the Tittie, "seein at dir a weddin comin aff da day efter da moarn."

"It's perhaps that very thing that's the reason."

"I see. Ye're maybe winderin if you're ain weddin is ever gaen ta come aff."

"Oh, no; that doesn't trouble me."

"Heth, it troubles a lok o da lasses, I kno dat. Bit mair as laekly ye'll be winderin if da fal-de-rals is comin up da moarn wi da post."

"That's exactly what I have been wondering. It will be something awful if the dresses don't turn up."

"Weel, I daarsay da weddin wid come aff even suppose ye went as ye wir. Da bride widna faint, an da bridegroom widna dee, if dey saw you in yon bloose ye wure yesterday."

"Yes, but I might faint, or at any rate be very uncomfortable if I had to go to a wedding unless I was properly dressed. Besides, these are the dresses you gave us; and surely you would like to see us wear them."

“Heth, dat’s true. I forgot about dat. Oh yiss; I want ta see you dressed, an dressed weel.”

“Whatever will we do if the dresses don’t arrive? There is no other post.”

“Do? It’s aesy ta fix dat up.”

“How?”

“You an Madam tak wan o da motors an go ta da toon fur dem. Dat’s aall at’s wantid.”

“You are a jewel. I never thought of such a thing. That will simply be splendid. What a load you have taken off my mind.”

“Dir no use o bein in da Govermint employ aless ye get some benefit fae it; an heth I tink dir waar things don as ta motor eichty miles fur frocks fur twa young leddies. Dir juist wan thing at I wid laek you ta du, though, if ye hae ta geng.”

“And what’s that, may I enquire?”

“I wid laek you ta tak Betty an Mary wi you. Betty is gotten intil a aet, yiss, shu’s nearly fur bindin, aboot yon bit o furnatir. Shu’s frichtened somebody buys it, an shu’s aafil anxuous ta get it. I’m not seen Betty in sic a state fae da time at Mary wis aafil ill wi da hoopin cough—anxuous, ye kno, anxuous, restless. Nothin ’ill plaese her bit ta go ta da toon an buy it herself.”

“Oh, to the town she shall go, then, even supposing we do not have to go ourselves.”

“So, dan, I’ll better rin ower da nicht an tell her ta pirpare.”

## Opinions on the First Volume.

Herbert J. C. Grierson, Esq., LL.D., author of the "First Half of the Seventeenth Century," and Editor of "The Poems of John Dorie," etc., Professor of English Literature in Edinburgh University, writes:—"The Humours of a Peat Commission," has given me some very pleasant hours. I laughed so much over it one night that it quite put me off my sleep. I think you have drawn *the* best picture of a Shetland peasant—genial, kindly, shrewd, and eloquent—that I know. With Mr Abernethy's drawing it is the very thing, with his 'da Loard's will,' and his fondness for a 'air' or a 'corn' o' whisky, and his blarney. An Irishman is not in it with him as regards the latter; and it would be impossible to imagine a greater contrast to the dry, dour Scots of this country. Honestly, I think your concert scene is the best thing of the kind I have read since I first came on some of the best things in the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*. Your persons don't discuss literature and philosophy, though the P.M. on Burns, etc., is excellent; but besides the character and humour of the scene, you have given an impression of the songs and recitations that is every bit as good, and completes the sense of fulness and variety in the same way. It is a great pleasure to a Shetlander to hear the dialect and the quaint phrasing again. I think your book will prove a Shetland classic. I hope when paper and things are cheaper, you will be able to bring out an edition-de-luxe. The P. M. is, of course, the great figure, but the other members are well etched in, and I greatly enjoyed the sitting in the kirk and some of the peasant sketches. They are Shetland through and through.

*Times* (London).—We see here in perfection the art of prodigality in public time and money, and can admire the skill and enjoyment with which these local worthies keep off the point, and the zest which they throw into steering clear of the business in hand. The "preliminary meetings," and a succession of dinners, suppers, and concerts and motor expeditions carry on to the "first sitting." Mr Manson has made a close phonetic study of the vernacular of Shetland, and the "proceedings" of the Commission are reported with inexhaustible humour.

*Scotsman*.—The book cannot but prove amusing reading to anyone who knows the ways of the Shetlanders, and should prove especially acceptable among service men up there who study how to get in close touch with the Islanders. Its well observed and neatly drawn illustrations are in keeping with the quietly smiling comedy of its prose.

*Glasgow Herald*.—Crowded national committees of supervision have happily inspired Mr Manson with the idea of a Government provision for Shetland. He gravely constitutes the Commission, and starts it upon its eventful career. Inevitably there comes an anticlimax, with details presenting a fine show of realism steadily buoyed up with genuine humour. The implied lesson is that actual knowledge should supersede vapid rhetoric, and the "Practical Member" chosen for its inculcation is a strong and admirable character. Incidentally the engaging record pleasantly reveals Shetland vernacular and local manners and customs, and the text is well supplemented by Mr Abernethy's clever illustrations. The projected sequel will be awaited with interest.

*Shetland Times*.—It is cleverly written, and there is not a dull line in it from start to finish. . . . It sets forth in splendid style the leisurely, dignified and self-important methods of Governmental Committees. . . . The Tittie is one of the best drawn characters in the book, and before the party has reached the Windy Grind on their first departure from Lerwick she has become a favourite with the reader, and her charms and freshness grow with longer association and closer acquaintance. . . . Mr Manson is to be congratulated on producing such a work. In these days when war and the rumours of war fill the land, it is good that men should have their minds turned to the lighter side of life, and we feel sure that every Shetlander will read this book with genuine pleasure. Especially will it be welcomed by Shetlanders abroad, who, on reading its pages will be carried back to the "Old Rock." . . . The printing and general get-up of the book is excellent, and the letterpress is clear and easy. We sincerely hope that this book may meet with such a success as will induce Mr Manson to issue further volumes.

*John O'Groat Journal.*—Mr Manson has struck a line in which his gifts as an exponent of the Shetland character find ample scope, and we shall be surprised if his readers will not, like *Oliver Twist*, ask for more.

. . . The author has grouped his characters admirably, and makes them speak and act in a manner that gives them consistent and distinct individuality. The Practical Member is not only the central figure in the "Commission," but an extremely diverting personality, who, nevertheless, throws a good deal of common-sense into his loquacity. The Tittie, a female character, is most pleasingly drawn. . . . Mr Manson is to be congratulated on a most entertaining creation. . . . The P. M. is human to the marrow of his bones. There is laughter for the reader on every page. Incidentally much interesting information concerning quaint customs, rare word, etc., in Shetland, is conveyed.

*Publishers' Circular.*—The Practical Member, Mr Jeremiah Laurenson, is the only member of the Commission who understands anything about peat, an almost self-educated son of the peat soil, whose shrewd remarks and unsophisticated actions are admirably portrayed. From many points of view the book is valuable as well as interesting; it is a living picture of life and conditions in Shetland, much of it described in the vernacular, with translations for which the "Southron" will be thankful. . . . We wish this little book could find its way anywhere where our friends and brother-sons "frae the North" are out there facing the Hun, it would delight them. The work, which is written, illustrated, printed and published in Lerwick, does credit to all concerned.

*Scots Pictorial.*—The leading feature of this highly amusing book is the doric of the far northern islands as expounded by a waggish old crofter-cum-fisherman who officiates as the practical member on a Parliamentary Commission appointed to inquire into the subject of peats. Mr Manson is to be congratulated upon having from so seemingly dry a subject created such a fund of humour. The reader's interest is maintained throughout, and, indeed, one might cherish a grudge against the author or the producers, for stopping short in the middle of the story, were it not for the promise in the prefix that it may be continued in another volume.











